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Violence and Desire in Brazilian Lesbian Relationships

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This book is dedicated to Tracy Maria Lemos.

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Preface

"I took her blood," Zita[1] stated matter-of-factly as she gestured toward her mouth. Having lived in the same household with Zita and her ex-lover/best friend Rita for three months at the beginning of 2008, I was not surprised to hear that Zita was capable of being physically violent toward her lover and then ex-lover Simone. Nevertheless, it was striking to hear in September 2008 that this violence was still occurring because Zita and Simone had separated, supposedly for the last time, before I had left Salvador in April of that year. Five months after moving out of Lagoa Grande,[2] I returned to my old neighborhood for a visit and to socialize with my ex-housemates. The neighborhood was celebrating the birthday of the twin saints Cosmas and Damian. Colored paper strips hung from telephone wires, and adults threw candy down to children from their balconies. I was sitting outside a tiny bar on a metal chair surrounded by plastic patio tables with beer logos on them. Similar to many other bars in neighborhoods across Salvador, this bar was not an official establishment but a "hole-in-the-wall" joint that was owned by a local resident whose clientele consisted of friends and neighbors. This particular bar was operated by a gay man who was a friend of my housemates. Sitting at the bar, sharing some beer with Rita and Zita, listening to blaring *axé* music (Afro-Brazilian music that is an infusion of samba, reggae, percussion, and pop), overhearing adults tell dirty jokes, and watching children pick up and eat candy—this was an idyllic return for me to Lagoa Grande—until Zita uttered those words. "*Tirei sangue dela*"—"I took her blood." Zita's nonchalance about her violence cloaked her aggression in banality, as did the fact that such violence is a "normal" part of life among many of the women that I have met in Salvador. In the midst of this neighborhood festival, I was listening to a woman tell me how she had physically assaulted her ex-lover, hitting Simone in her braces-filled mouth, a mouth that consequently was cut up on the inside. Zita's and Simone's on-again/off-again relationship officially, definitely, ended in downtown Salvador during the tenth annual pride parade. While arguing at the parade about Simone's alleged sexual betrayals with both women and men, Zita and Simone were interrupted by a male off-duty police officer who may have been an acquaintance of Simone. He

threatened to shoot Zita and eventually took her away, leaving her (unharmed) at Salvador's regional bus terminal, the Rodoviária. Rita, Zita's ex-lover and housemate, said that Simone had cuckolded Zita, and ultimately, Zita decided that it was finally over with her. Yet there I was, months after all this occurred, hearing Zita tell me so calmly about how she had made Simone bleed and, not a moment later, about how her "heart still wanted Simone."

Acknowledgments

"God wanted me to conduct research about lesbian women in Brazil." I have often made this statement over the years because "luck" and "chance" inadequately describe my experiences conducting fieldwork. I do not exaggerate when I state that it has been with relative ease that I have been able to encounter lesbian women throughout my travels in Brazil. More important, they embraced my research project and were willing to share their lives with me. Thus I am forever grateful for these lesbian and *entendida* women who gave me the privilege of hearing their stories and *experiencing* life alongside them. Conducting ethnography was an intense, emotional, and ultimately extraordinary experience for me because of the friendships that I developed in Salvador. My gratitude also extends to LGBT organizations in Salvador because their leaders generously gave me permission to attend meetings, granted me access to their members, and personally met with me on numerous occasions. Additionally, I was able to draw on the support of lesbian activists and organizations in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Since this book is the culmination of my dissertation project, I thank my dissertation advisor Michael Herzfeld, dissertation committee members Arthur Kleinman and James N. Green, and former advisor J. Lorand Matory, who were willing to give me their insight and knowledge. Their valuable critiques pushed me to delve deeper into my arguments, and their efforts were not in vain; their academic guidance is evinced in this work. I greatly appreciate their engagement with my research and feel privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from them. I particularly want to express my sincere gratitude to Jim, who has believed in me and my desire to conduct research about lesbian women in Brazil since I first met him in 2005. Additionally, I am grateful for the support of friends who have contributed to the intellectual and emotional maturation of this book. Eva Pascal and Xelaju Korda have given me their friendship and expertise in matters of Latin America and Brazil, respectively. Sharon Abramowitz provided thoughtful suggestions about my dissertation objectives, and I thank her. Since the commencement of my dissertation research until my return to Brazil in 2013, this project has been graciously supported by the

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It may be rare for dissertation writers to express gratitude to their in-laws, yet I must with sincere *amor, respeito*, and *honra* recognize the family of my wife, Tracy—her mother Maria da Conceição Bretão de Sousa Lemos (Maria Connie Lemos), father Rui Manuel de Freitas Cardoso Lemos (Roy Lemos), and even grandmother Maria Alice de Freitas Cardoso Lemos (Maria Alíce Lemos)—because my experiences with my Azorean in-laws became a part of *my* story and the history of my life that I shared with women in Salvador. Without their presence and perspectives, I believe something very valuable would have been missing from my overall research experiences in Brazil. *Muito obrigada.*

I have received love, support, and prayers from my parents Denise and Andre Allen, my grandmother Lillie Boykin, and my four older sisters JeTaun, LeShaun, ShaWanda, and LaWanda. And the sheer joy that I have experienced because my twelve nieces and nephews (Khaliya, DeAndre, Jazmyne, Clayton, Amarion, Jaycob, Derrick, Trinity, Jenyse, Gabriel, Alanna, and Arianna) are in my life has simply sustained me during the process of conducting fieldwork, writing my dissertation, and revising my manuscript for publication. My family has always been confident in me, my intellect, and my professional goals, and I know how blessed I am to have this knowledge in my heart.

My heart as well as intellectual capabilities have undoubtedly expanded since Tracy Maria Lemos came into my life. Because we began dating in December 2004, Tracy has experienced all the trials and tribulations that went into my quest to study lesbian women in Brazil and complete my doctorate. To my benefit, Tracy has been my advisor, colleague, proofreader, editor, and most forcefully, my all-around champion. She believed in my research when my faith had faltered and encouraged me to let go of my fear of discussing violence in lesbian relationships. Without her, I do not know if I would have had the courage, the gumption, or the *chutzpah* to write this book. *Eu te amo.*

Introduction

"We Are Phantasms": Lesbian and *Entendida* Women in Brazil

Josafina Lobato, Angela Diniz, and Elaine de Grammont were all victims of intimate partner violence (IPV), whether killed by a husband (Josafina), a boyfriend (Angela), or an ex-husband (Elaine). "Crimes of passion" and "honor killings" have been cultural fixtures of Brazilian society since it was a Portuguese colony (Besse 1996; Corrêa 1981; Caulfield 2000; Roure 2009). It was not until the 1970s and early 1980s that mainstream media began to pay attention to this phenomenon, in part due to the efforts of the burgeoning feminist movement in Brazil.[1] Although Brazil outlawed the act of a husband murdering his adulterous wife or lover under the country's first penal code in 1831, the "legitimate defense of honor" argument had been successfully employed as a viable defense throughout much of the country's history (Corrêa 1981; Santos 2005:88). Until the mid-1980s, men were routinely acquitted or received light sentences if they were found guilty of killing their lovers because their murderous acts were perceived as crimes of "violent emotion." Furthermore, only in 1991 did the Brazilian courts deem the "defense of honor" argument impermissible in court (Azambuja and Nogueira 2008:110; Roure 2009:73; Santos 2005:89). The unwillingness and ineffectiveness of the judicial system in dealing with honor killings and spousal murder also mirrored the indifference with which Brazilian society, in general, responded to nonfatal IPV against women.[2] While there appear to be regional differences in the levels of IPV—the levels are highest in the north and northeast regions of Brazil (Reichenheim et al. 2006:433)—IPV in Brazil is, and has always been, "a national epidemic" (Roure 2009:92). A population-based study in Brazil found that 43 percent of Brazilian women stated that they had suffered from IPV; 33 percent of women had been physically assaulted, 13 percent sexually, and 27 percent psychologically, primarily by their husbands, ex-husbands, boyfriends, and ex-boyfriends (Venturi and Recamán 2004:25). Furthermore, approximately two million women are physically assaulted by their husband, boyfriend, ex-lover, or a male

companion every year (Venturi and Recamán 2004:25); every fifteen seconds a woman is impeded from leaving her home (Venturi and Recamán 2004:26); every fifteen seconds a woman is forced to have sexual relations against her will (Venturi and Recamán 2004:26); and 20–25 percent of Brazilian women have been a victim of physical domestic abuse in their lifetime. Another study published in 2006 found that at least 78 percent of women in a population-based survey had experienced psychological aggression in the twelve months prior to being interviewed (Reichenheim et al. 2006:429). In the same study, one out of seven women had experienced at least one incident of physical violence that involved punching, beating, choking, or the brandishing of a knife or firearm (Reichenheim et al. 2006:432). IPV is a phenomenon that affects the lives of many women in Brazil, and it is a major part of life, too, for women in same-sex relationships in Salvador, the capital city of the state of Bahia.

"Tirei Sangue Dela" **("I Took Her Blood")**

By the time I heard Zita, my ex-housemate, say these words to me, gesturing toward her mouth to indicate whence she had taken the blood of Simone, I was not surprised to hear a woman telling me about IPV in her romantic relationships with other women. Unfortunately, acts of physical violence such as Zita's are not uncommon occurrences among women in same-sex relationships in Salvador, Brazil. Over and over again, I heard stories about the physical altercations between women and their female lovers, I saw their scars, and more than once, I witnessed in my own living room or heard through my bedroom wall verbal and nonverbal acts of aggression that occurred between my housemate Zita and her braces-wearing girlfriend, Simone. IPV between lesbian women was a phenomenon that I could not ignore. In order to make sense of this phenomenon as it manifests itself in Salvador, Brazil, I focus—through ethnography—on four major themes: the social violence perpetrated against lesbian[3] and *entendida* (Portuguese word for a woman who has female lovers)[4] women in Salvador and in Brazilian society; women's same-sex desires and sexual practices; infidelity, jealousy, and IPV in lesbian relationships; and the Brazilian government's overall response to the problem of IPV in the country. Through an analysis of the aforementioned themes, I demonstrate how dominant Brazilian political, cultural, social, and sexual ideologies[5] greatly influence, but do not always restrain, the experiences and perspectives of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador. Of these national ideologies or narratives that pervade Brazilian society, its imagination, and cultural psyche, the concept of "Brazilian emotionality" is the most pervasive and influential in relation to Brazilian practices of embodiment and the phenomenon of IPV in the country (Rezende 2003, 2008). The notion that Brazilians are a naturally passionate and intense people is highly

influential not because it insinuates that Brazilians are an emotional people who are innately violent. Instead, Brazilian emotionality is an example of "cultural intimacy" (Herzfeld 1997) because Brazilian women and men, as well as the government, consciously and unconsciously employ this ideology in "everyday living" and in governmental practices. Thus the "erotic autonomy," to borrow from M. Jacqui Alexander (2005), of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador and their experiences with IPV reveal, paradoxically, how one of the most invisible populations or subgroups in this country can fully embody, for better or worse, Brazilian citizenship.

Literature Review

Gender, Sexuality, Citizenship, and Nationalism

Discussing Brazilian lesbian women and Brazilian citizenship engages with interdisciplinary discourses that have deconstructed the relationships between gender, sexuality, citizenship, and nationalism. Their experiences represent—to a degree—David Evans's concept of "sexual citizenship," which he describes as the confluence of capitalism, materialism, consumption, and governmentality in the construction of heteronormativity and sexual minority status (1993).[6] As useful as "sexual citizenship" has been in queer studies, its focus on the economic materiality of citizenship[7] elides the "materialness" of racialized, immigrant, and transnational identities on queer citizens (Cruz and Manalansan 2002; Grewal and Kaplan 2001; Povinelli and Chauncey 1999; Puar 2001).[8] Since Brazilian lesbian women are female citizens of the Brazilian nation-state, they are also affected by a "gendered citizenship" that, cross-culturally, has limited women's ability to garner state services, to act as agentive participants in political processes, and to shape their own images as the symbolic representations of the nation-state (Jones 1997; Pateman 1988; Vogel 1991; Walby 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997a, 1999, 2007; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999).[9] In a similar vein to the critique of Evan's sexual citizenship, analyzing citizenship through the narrow lens of gender can also be problematic because citizenship is not only gendered.[10] For example, anthropologists have grounded this interdisciplinary focus through ethnographic analysis of citizenship as a project of assimilation (Ong 1996, 2003; Rosaldo 1999), subjectivity and self-making (Allen 2011; Lazar and Nuijten 2013), assertion of land rights (Holston 2008; Perry 2013), political activism and participation (Aretxaga 1997; Caldwell 2007; Caldwell et al. 2009; Goldstein 2004), health status (Petryna 2002), and security (Caldeira 2000; Holston and Caldeira 1998).[11] Within many of these works, gender, race, and sexuality are important themes, underscoring how the coproduction of these intermingling concepts cannot be disconnected from the development of citizenship as well as the construction of nation-building and nationalism.[12]

In the discussion of the relationships between gender, race, and sexuality and nationalism, George Mosse's seminal text *Nationalism and Sexuality* is one of the earliest contributions to the dialogue (1985). He describes in this work the expansion of modern nationalism in Europe, particularly in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, and argues that industrialization and modernity significantly influenced the construction and normalization of sexuality, the codification of gender roles, and the desire for the "nuclear family." Significant interdisciplinary texts have followed Mosse's lead and have considered the subjects of gender and sexuality and their relationship with the creation of nationalism (Doyle and Pamplona 2006; McClintock et al. 1997; Mayer 2000; Parker et al. 1992; Sommer 1991; Stoler 1995; Trexler 1995). In other works, scholars have commented specifically on the interplay between the European male "colonizer" and the female "colonized" in Africa and Asia (McClintock 1993, 1995; Stoler 1992, 1995, 2002). These critical examinations of nationalism and colonialism illustrate how sexual mores are used by governments to maintain control over of their citizens through citizens' self-regulation of their sexual behavior (Foucault 1990; Lewis 2008). While Mosse mainly focused on male same-sex sexuality in his work, other scholars' approaches are more inclusive and "queer" this discussion of nationalist rhetoric (Alexander 1994; Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Bunzl 2004; Gopinath 2005), rendering the nation-state as well as transnational communities as sites of affirmation of and resistance to heteronormative machinations on queer bodies. As Jasbir Puar has argued, however, heteronormativity does not necessarily have to be at odds with queerness when both are deployed to advance a white, neoliberal, and American agenda that otherizes "backward" (i.e., Muslim) countries that supposedly breed antigay hate and violence, and ultimately, terrorism (2006). This phenomenon, what Puar describes as "homonationalism," extends beyond American borders and is exemplified, according to Puar, in the Israeli practice of pinkwashing, which she describes as "Israel's promotion of a LGTBQ-friendly image to reframe the occupation of Palestine in terms of civilizational narratives measured by (sexual) modernity" (2013:337). Although Puar's "homonationalism" has proven "good to think with" for scholars of North American colonialism and sexual colonization,[13] I agree with Jafari Allen and his critique of homonationalism: "But, what about homosexuality or trans identity, and various Caribbean or African nationalisms, in the south; or the position of the black subject within US or Canadian settler-colonialism, for example. Puar's incisive theoretic is not equipped to attend to this. Queer theory will have to expand its optics, archives, and its politics to successfully *see* and *say* what is happening among black sexual minorities and gender nonconformists" (2013:553–54). The legacy and reality of race in Brazil is indeed different from its history in the United States; however, people of African descent do engage with the concept of "blackness" across

the Americas even if it is *shaded* differently in each locale. Disagreements about "black" identity within Brazil abound (and are discussed in Chapter 1), but Allen's admonishment is salient for a discussion of race and nationalism in Brazil precisely because of these tensions. Furthermore, because the vast majority of the interlocutors in this work are self-identified *negra* (black), *pardo* (brown), or Afro-Brazilian[14] women, it is necessary to ask the question, as Allen prompts: "But what about black desire, power, and differential agency across borders of nationality, class, gender, and citizenship?" (2013:553). To answer this question within a Brazilian context, I specifically consider Afro-Brazilian lesbian women's negotiations with nationalist discourses that are rooted in Brazilian cultural ideologies that extol whiteness, maleness, and wealth alongside brown—not black—sensuality and womanhood.

Brazil's Sexual Universe

Considering the centrality of brown female bodies and sexuality in domestic and foreign depictions of Brazil, it is ironic that Afro-Brazilian and, frankly, all Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women are mainly invisible in Brazilian society. Globally, and even within Brazilian borders, beliefs abound about the innate sensuality, sexuality, and overall "hotness" of Brazilians, particularly Brazilian women (McCallum 1999; Piscitelli 1996; Quintas 1986). The carnality of Carnaval, the sultry rhythms of samba, the "Brazilian wax," and the reign of Brazilian supermodels invite and confirm these characterizations. Within the study of Brazilian sexuality, "sex-positive" (Goldstein 2003:228–36) ideologies have also had significant roles. Richard Parker's *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions: Sexual Culture in Contemporary Brazil* epitomizes the influence of this conceptualization of Brazilian sexual lives (1991). Based on historical evidence, gender and sex theories, and ethnographic material, Parker argues that an "ideology of the erotic" rules the Brazilian sexual universe. According to Parker, the "ideology of the erotic" allows for the transgression of sexual taboos and norms. With the publication and dissemination of this work, a specific vision of Brazilian sexuality is reaffirmed: Brazilians are sexually open, adventurous, transgressive, *and* enticing. While Parker's claims are debatable,[15] *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions* is an exemplar of the general tendencies in the study of Brazilian sexuality by non-Brazilians to focus on men, usually gay and/or bisexual men, in their research (Fry 1982, 1985; Green 1999a; Green et al. 2005; Kulick 1998a, 1998b; Matory 2005a, 2005b; Parker 1985, 1989, 1991, 1999; Sell 1987; Whitam 1986). Beginning with Ruth Landes's text *The City of Women* (1947), the study of male same-sex sexuality has monopolized North American, European, and even Brazilian academic discourses about Brazilian sexuality. There is a certain irony to the fact that Landes declared Salvador "the city of women" in her ethnography because women seemed to reign over a sexless matriarchy.

Following Landes's lead, there are few published works in English or Portuguese that discuss female sexuality in great detail, including women's same-sex sexual experiences in Afro-Brazilians religions (Allen 2012; Birman 1995; Mesquita 2004; Segato 2000; Teixeira 2000). While much scholarship has focused on Brazilian male sexuality, only toward the end of the twentieth century have Brazilian and non-Brazilian anthropologists begun to conduct studies that concentrated on Brazilian women's sexuality (Goldstein 2003; Gregg 2003; McCallum 1999; Piscitelli 2007; Rebhun 1994, 2004; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Turner 2014). Each of these works highlights how women must grapple with the dominant cultural and sexual norms that designate women as the passive/submissive partners in sexual encounters and in romantic relationships overall. Regardless of their foci, none discuss women's same-sex sexual experiences, relationships, desires, and activities.[16] Beyond these works about Brazilian women's (hetero) sexuality, no ethnographic monograph and only a few substantial articles have been published in English about lesbian, *entendida*, or other women who have sex with women in Brazil (Allen 2012; Castle 2008; Mora and Monteiro 2010; Whitam et al. 1998).[17] In contrast to the lack of information in English about the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil, there has been a continual production of Portuguese-language publications that have provided information specifically about lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil, including the following: ethnographic data (Grossi 2003; Heilborn 2004; Palma and Levandowski 2008; Lacombe 2007; Medeiros 2006; Mendonça 1981; Modesto 2009; Moutinho 2006);[18] historical assessments of women's same-sex experiences in Brazil (Bellini 1989; Mott 1987; Nogueira 2008);[19] and, particularly, public health information (Almeida 2005 Facchini et al. 2006, 2009; Barbosa and Koyama 2006; Marques et al. 2013; Mora and Monteiro 2010; Valadão and Gomes 2011). Of the aforementioned works, the earliest ones (Bellini,[20] Mendonça,[21] and Mott[22]) are especially notable since they were written during periods in which female same-sex sexuality was not a topic of discussion in Brazilian academic conversations. While this literature is valuable, few monographs and/or articles have been published in Brazil that provide extensive ethnographic information about the lives of lesbian, *entendida*, and other women in same-sex relationships.[23] One impediment may be that it has been difficult for Brazilian researchers to ascertain an accurate estimate of the number of Brazilian women who have had same-sex relationships and/or self-identify as lesbian. A 1998 survey of Brazilians in urban areas found that 3 percent of women and men have had same-sex relations in their lifetimes. A similar study was conducted in 2005, but reliable estimates could not be obtained because few same-sex relationships were reported by the respondents. This "nonfinding" indicated to the researchers that fear of prejudice and stigmatization were likely factors, not a decrease in female same-sex activity (Barbosa and Koyama 2006:31).

Female Same-Sex Sexuality in Anthropology

The dearth of published ethnographic research about female same-sex sexuality in Brazil—in both Portuguese and English—typifies the anthropological study of this subject in other areas of the Global South. Although anthropologists have collected ethnographic data about the sexual practices of the "natives" since the early twentieth century (Malinowski 1927, 1929; Mead 1935), Andrew Lyons and Harriet Lyons have concluded that sexuality has never been a dominant theme in the discipline (2004). Even within the anthropological subfield of sexuality studies, focus on same-sex practices that do not involve rituals has been marginalized. The ethnographers and ethnographies that focus solely on same-sex sexual practices have also faced marginalization (Elliston 2005; Lyons and Lyons 2004; Vance 2005; Weston 1993). Additionally, within this sub-subfield, female same-sex sexuality has been even more marginalized (Lewin and Leap 1996, 2002, 2009). Only a handful of noteworthy anthologies have focused on this topic (Blackwood and Wieringa 1999; Morgan and Wieringa 2005; Reinfelder 1996; Wieringa et al. 2007). Moreover, there are few full-length ethnographic monographs that concentrate exclusively on female same-sex sexuality outside of North America and Europe (Blackwood 2010; Engebretsen 2013; Sinnott 2004; Wekker 2006). Of particular note is Wekker's *Politics of Passion*, which describes the experiences of working- and lower-class Surinamese women who engage in same-sex sexual relationships or *mati-ism*. Her ethnography skillfully provides a rich theoretical and ethnographic depiction of black female sexualities,[24] epitomizing the possibilities of which Evelyn Hammonds discusses in her works about the foregrounding of pleasure, desire, and agency in analyses about black women's sexuality (1994, 1997).[25] Unfortunately, *Politics of Passion* does not delve deeply into the issue of IPV in women's same-sex relationship. This lack of discussion is significant because there are several passages that briefly discuss women's violent conflicts with each other. Furthermore, although Wekker identifies jealousy and infidelity as two core issues that factor into women's violent conflicts with each other (2006:47–48, 198–201), the ethnography does not provide a significant amount of details about women's experiences with IPV. Based on Wekker's descriptions, jealousy, infidelity, and violence appear to factor greatly in Surinamese women's relationships with each other. Wekker's ethnography is not alone in its lack of substantial discussion of IPV in same-sex relationships between women, as a review of anthropological literature indicates no ethnographic monograph has been published on this subject.

Anthropology and Violence

While the field of anthropology has not delved deeply into the subject of IPV in women's same-sex relationships, the topic of violence is a well-covered area of inquiry. For example, operational, cognitive, and experiential are categories of analysis that have provided anthropologists with useful frameworks for understanding violence as a function of power, a social/cultural construction, and a lived experience (Schmidt and Schröder 2001:1).[26] In general, anthropologists have been especially keen to analyze violence as a state-sponsored enterprise that seeks to conquer external and internal forces that are perceived as threats to the legitimate or even "illegitimate" authority of the state (Benda-Beckmann and Pirie 2007; Besteman 2002; Chatterji 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Coronil and Skurski 2006; Fassin 2013; Korf and Raeymaekers 2013; Lubkemann 2008; Moran 2006; Nordstrom 2004; Spencer 2007; Warren 1993). Thus a majority of the most influential anthropological works on violence have focused less on violence as an interpersonal experience and more as a mechanism of macropower that produces bodily harm, torture, and death. Yet there has also been a subset of recent anthropological works that have focused on societal and communal levels of violence against women as a result of political conflicts and war (Abramowitz 2014; Boesten 2014; Burnet 2012; Theidon 2013). Alongside this focus on the physicality and societal consequences of violence, medical anthropologists have been at the forefront of emphasizing the experiential or subjective[27] aspects of violence (Aretxaga 1997, 2005; Bradby and Hundt 2010; Daniel 1996; Das 2007; Das et al. 2000, 2001; Farmer 1996, 2003; Feldman 1991; James 2010; Kleinman 1999; Kleinman et al. 1997; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004). The theoretical and moral inclinations of medical anthropologists are exemplified by this definition of violence from Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois's introduction to the anthology *Violence in War and Peace*: "Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality—force, assault, or the infliction of pain—alone. Violence also includes assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim. The social and cultural dimensions of violence are what give violence its power and meaning" (2004:1). Influenced by medical anthropology's engagement with the subject of violence, in this ethnography I consider violence as a phenomenon that encompasses mental, physical, moral, and even spiritual suffering for human beings whose subjective selves are enmeshed in intersubjective worlds and conditions. For example, the experiences of Paul Farmer with his patients in Haiti have led him to a focus on violence as not merely a singular phenomenon outside the normal flow of "everyday living" but as integral to the constitution of everyday life—that is, structural violence. Institutional forces like racism, sexism, political violence,

and severe socioeconomic inequality, among other societal mechanisms, severely affect and inflict "structural violence" on the lives of people who occupy the lowest statuses in society (1996). Farmer's concept considers both the relationship between societal ideologies and institutions and the effects of these policies and structures. Specifically, Farmer asserts that structural violence has produced inadequate health care systems around the globe and an overall global pattern of social inequality. These effects, from emotional and mental anguish to unnecessary illnesses and starvation, produce "social suffering," which "results from what political, economic, and institutional power does to people and, reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems. . . . It reveals the interpersonal grounds of suffering: in other words, that suffering is a social experience" (Kleinman et al. 1997:ix). Social suffering is an embodied as well as a shared experience, and like structural violence, social suffering is insidious within social or cultural frameworks. Consequently, I rely on these medical anthropological theories about violence because they provide dexterity and versatility in an analysis of lesbian and *entendida* women's experiences with IPV.

Violence and Women in Literature

The study of violence against women, gender-based violence, and IPV against women by anthropologists has encompassed a cross-section of disciplinary interests, including medical, legal, and feminist (Chatterjee and Jeganathan 2000; Das 2007; Lahti 2001; Merry 1995, 2001, 2009; Parson 2013; Wies and Haldane 2011). In particular, anthropologists such as Sally Engle Merry have illustrated that IPV is representative of women's subjugation and oppression on both cultural and global levels. Merry notes that in the early 1980s, women and feminist activists began to connect "violence against women" with human rights violations. In the next decade, activists fought to expand further the concept of "violence against women" at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 and at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 (Merry 2006: Introduction).[28] As Merry states, "While violence exists in a culture-free zone of injury and death, its meanings are deeply informed by social contexts. The substrate of violence against women is a universal space of pain and suffering that can be understood across cultural differences, but gender-based violence is embedded in cultural understandings of gender and sexuality as well as in the institutions of marriage, community, and state legal regulations of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody" (2006:24–25). Merry affirms that women around the world experience physical, sexual, mental, and emotional violence and domination. However, she still argues that there needs to be cultural specificity in regard to categorizations of violence, which should directly be connected to gender ideals. Thus, while

similar, "violence against women" and "gender-based violence" are frameworks that also diverge from each other. The former points to the universality of women's violent experiences, whereas the latter addresses the history, location, and the context of a woman's life in relation to her experiences of violence. Regardless of how men's violence against their romantic female partners is labeled, statistics indicate that IPV against women is pervasive throughout the world, though countries and regions have differing rates of prevalence (Azambuja and Nogueira 2008; Ellsberg et al. 2008; García-Moreno et al. 2006; Heise et al. 2002; Heise et al. 1999; O'Toole et al. 2007). To account for the global occurrence of IPV, scholars have sought to categorize IPV within specific theoretical frameworks that encompass theories about cultural production exchange, ecological factors, and feminist-orientations (Hautzinger 2007:42–45). According to Heise et al. (2002), scholars increasingly employ the "ecological framework," which approaches IPV from the standpoint of analyzing "the interactions of factors at different levels of social environment." (Heise et al. 2002:S8).[29] In contrast to scholars and activists of gender-based violence, who primarily focus on violence in the experiences of women, girls, and lastly, boys, scholars of "family violence" like R. Emerson Dobash and Russell Dobash highlight seemingly mutual or symmetrical displays of violence between women and men in heterosexual relationships (Dobash and Dobash 1992, 1998; Dobash et al. 2004).[30] While the labeling of IPV encounters between heterosexual couples as "family violence" may elide the severity of men's violent acts toward women (Morse 1995; Stets and Straus 1990; Straus 1990), their interest in women's violent behavior acknowledges an important reality: women engage in violent behavior even though they are the "weaker" sex (Eager 2008; McKelvey 2007; Morris 2008; Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

Violence in Female Same-Sex Relationships

Women's capacity and/or propensity for violence in romantic relationships becomes apparent in a study of IPV in lesbian relationships. Twenty-five years ago, the publication of *Naming the Violence: Speaking Out against Lesbian Battering* began the steadily growing exploration of IPV in same-sex,[31] especially lesbian, relationships in North America.[32] Since this work, the study of IPV has been in two primary domains: the health care sciences (Hamberger and Renzetti 1996; McClennen and Gunther 1999; McKenry et al. 2006; Renzetti 1992, 1998; Renzetti and Miley 1998; Ristock 2002, 2003; Seelau and Seelau 2005; Turrell 1999, 2000; Turrell and Cornell-Swanson 2005; Turrell and Herman 2008; Walters 2011; West 2002) and legal scholarship, beginning with Ruth Robson's 1990 article, "Lavender Bruises: Intra-Lesbian Violence, Law and Lesbian Legal Theory" (Goldfarb 1996; Hodges 1999; Jeffries and Ball 2008; Knauer 1998, 2003; Morrison 2003; Pfeifer 2005; Potoczniak et al. 2003; West

1992).[33] Even though there is scholarship available on IPV in same-sex relationships, reliable statistics or estimates about the rate of IPV have been difficult to acquire. Despite these difficulties, a 2002 survey of the literature concluded that "most studies found that between 30–40 percent of surveyed participants had been involved in at least one relationship with a female partner where an incident of physical abuse occurred. Pushing, shoving, and slapping were the most commonly reported forms of abuse, while beatings and assaults with weapons were less frequent" (West 2002:123).[34] Based on the data, it would seem that roughly one out of three American and Canadian lesbian women have been involved in at least one physical altercation, either as perpetrator, victim, or both, with a female lover. Since most North American literature about IPV in lesbian relationships is overrepresented by "white, middle-class, educated lesbians who were open about their sexual orientation" (West 2002:122), few large-scale and data-driven studies have been conducted that substantially discuss the experiences of women of color—black, Latina, Asian, and Aboriginal, and Native American women (Bimbi et al. 2007; Chung and Lee 2002; Hill et al. 2012; Holmes 2009; Kanuha 1990; Robinson 2002; Simpson and Helfrich 2014; Turrell and Cornell-Swanson 2005). Additionally, in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships, similar risk factors have been associated with IPV, such as "intergenerational transmission of abuse, for example, witnessing or experiencing violence in the family of origin, and substance abuse, relationship dependency, and power imbalances" (West 2002:124). Some scholars have also noted a connection between IPV and culturally identified traits of masculinity or a masculine personality (Burke and Follingstad 1999; Gelles 1999; Little and Terrance 2010; McKenry et al. 2006; Walters 2011). While these dynamics or conditions are not unique to lesbian women's experiences, researchers have also found that there are some risk factors that may be connected to same-sex sexuality and women's romantic relational patterns with each other. For instance, internalized homophobia can lead to self-hatred and negative feelings that are "acted out in the form of lesbian battering" (West 2002:124). In addition, because women are socialized to "place a high value on intimacy . . . it may be even more difficult for them to establish a sense of independence and autonomy in their relationship" (West 2002:125). This prioritization of intimacy can create a "fusion" of identities, which can produce dire consequences when one partner feels rejected (Mencher 1997; Miller et al. 2001; Milletich et al. 2014; Renzetti 1998). While scholars differ in their interpretations of the causes of IPV in lesbian relationships, they are in agreement that IPV is a problem among lesbian women in North America. In comparison with the North American scholarship about IPV in same-sex relationships, Brazilian research about this phenomenon among sexual and gender minorities in Brazil is in its infancy. For example, in their assessment of the health care needs of lesbian and

entendida women in Brazil, Regina Facchini and Regina Maria Barbosa raise the issue of IPV as a real problem among these women. Their pamphlet about lesbian health care only provides a broad outline of different issues that lesbian and *entendida* women confront, and it is not an ethnographic text (Facchini et al. 2006). Adriana Nunan and Daniella Tebar Avena have also addressed this issue of IPV among lesbian and *entendida* women in theoretical articles about the subject matter (Avena 2010; Nunan 2004). One Brazilian scholar who has published ethnographic material about IPV in same-sex relationships is Luiz Mott. In a short book titled *Violência Doméstica entre Casais Homossexuais* (*Domestic Violence among Homosexual Couples*), Mott provides a rare glimpse into this facet of the world of gay men and transgender and transsexual women in Salvador and their experiences with IPV (2003b).[35] While the aforementioned works are noteworthy, especially Mott's, no substantial ethnographic study of IPV in same-sex relationships has been in published in Brazil. Theoretical writings notwithstanding, I have focused on the lack of ethnographic material about this phenomenon because, I would argue, "thick descriptions" (Geertz 1973) of IPV are of the utmost importance. The physical and "intimate" nature of domestic violence calls for an equally close examination of the experiences of both the perpetrators and the victims of this form of violence. Therefore, in this ethnography, I bring to the fore the detailed experiences and perceptions of lesbian and *entendida* women with IPV.

Methodology

My ethnographic study of lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil began more than ten years ago when I was an undergraduate student at Northwestern University. I first conducted an ethnographic interview with a lesbian woman from Salvador in November 2000 when I was studying abroad, and I returned in the spring of 2001 to interview more women. These experiences laid the foundation for the fifteen months of fieldwork that I would conduct between June 2005 and August 2009 in Brazil. For twelve of those fifteen months, I lived in Salvador in different locations: a studio apartment by myself, with a host family, with lesbian women who were friends as well as ex-lovers, and with a lesbian couple and their friend. I lived for three months in each of the lesbian households, which were distinctly different from each other. The first lesbian household was located in a *bairro popular* (poor/working-class neighborhood) about a half an hour from downtown Salvador, and the second household was located in a mixed lower-middle/middle-class neighborhood near the downtown area. I was graciously hosted by these lesbian women who I had encountered through my interactions with different lesbian social networks over the years.[36] Overall, my ability to carry out research was greatly supported by the fact that I was able

to interact with disparate social networks in the city of Salvador, including black lesbian feminist activists; black academics; black activists; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, *travesti*, and transsexual (LGBT)[37] organizations; a local friendship circle in my neighborhood of Lagoa Grande (a pseudonym); and a community of middle- to upper-middle-class white and light brown–skinned lesbian women. Consequently, I had a diverse pool of potential participants for my study, and I was able to socialize with lesbian and *entendida* women in different social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. More important, because I knew many of the lesbian activists in the city, saw them regularly, and attended their meetings, I continually was able to discuss my research with them and get their feedback (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). Thus much of my time in Salvador was spent repeatedly socializing with different networks of women or with women individually on an informal basis and not as a pretext to conduct a formal interview. As a result of this approach, I was able to socialize with a greater number of women than the thirty-eight that I formally interviewed. In fact, there were perhaps ten women whom I had gotten to know but had not conducted a formal interview with whose experiences have also influenced my analysis. Besides these ten or so women, I conservatively have met at least a hundred lesbian and *entendida* women just in Salvador. For those women with whom I did conduct formal semistructured and life history interviews, I engaged in a multistage "getting to know" you process with almost all of them before the first "formal" interview. In many ways, "my story" was as much as a selling point as the short project spiel I would give women when I first met them. First, it was clear to me that my dark brown skin was an asset and provided me, to an extent, with an "insider status"[38] with many of the women I encountered in Salvador, a city full of brown bodies of every shade. Equally important, in my estimation, was my identification as a lesbian woman who was married. I often would discuss my wedding ceremony with women, show them pictures, and even discuss my wife's family with them. Although women were amazed to hear that my father, a Baptist minister, as well as my grandmother, attended my wedding, I believe my wife's own familial background was even more of an asset for me: Tracy is the daughter of Azorean immigrants to the United States and grew up in a Portuguese community outside Providence, Rhode Island. I often described Tracy's relationship with her grandmother and their "don't ask, don't tell" policy about the nature of my relationship with her granddaughter. In these moments, I especially bonded with the middle-class women as we shared with each other our worries and anxieties about complicated family matters.

The sensitive nature of this study—I was inquiring about women's sexual preferences—necessitated that I establish a good rapport with women.[39] As a result of my initiative, support from friends, and fortuity, I interacted in infor-mal/social occasions with at least thirty-one of the thirty-eight women with

whom I conducted interviews. These relationships helped to produce informative interview sessions as well as relaxed informal interactions between these women and myself. Even for those seven women with whom I had only interacted once or twice, I was able to spend hours talking with the majority of them on an individual basis. Additionally, the formal interview sessions themselves were designed in such a way to "ease" women into the experience of sharing their lives with me. The formal interviews were divided into two parts: In the first session, I asked women their opinions about a number of political, social, and cultural topics, such as racism, sexism, class issues, sexuality, homophobia, citizenship, Brazilian identity, and Carnaval. Questions in the second session focused on their personal demographics, early sexual experiences, relationship and sexual history, and issues that related to romance, expectations, and fidelity. My goal was to have a natural progression in the deepening of intimacy levels with each question and topic. Of course, how a woman responded to a specific question ultimately dictated the structure and flow of the interviews. Once I asked a woman about her religious background, and she began telling me about her first same-sex relationship with her male pastor's wife. Accordingly, my experiences talking with, interacting, observing, and even living with a few (four) of these thirty-eight lesbian and *entendida* women, in addition to socializing with dozens of other women, formed the foundation of this ethnography.

Lesbian and *Entendida* Women in Salvador

The thirty-eight lesbian and *entendida* women who are discussed in this ethnography represent a cross-section of social, cultural, and economic realities in Salvador. Since the vast majority of the women in the study identified as black or brown, I often employ the term "Afro-Brazilian" to characterize the women who identified as having African descent. While Afro-Brazilian was not a category of self-identification for the women in the study, most used either *lésbica* (lesbian) or *entendida* to identify themselves; at least twenty-four women self-identified as lesbians, six women as *entendidas*, one woman as bisexual, and the other seven women did not self-categorize themselves or I was not able to obtain this piece of information. Thirty-two women either self-identified as *negra* (black) or *parda* (brown), and six identified as *branca* (white).[40] In terms of basic demographics, the oldest woman was fifty-eight years old and the youngest two were nineteen years old. Nineteen women were in their twenties, seven in their thirties, five in their forties, and five in their fifties. Eight women had children—six had one child and two had two children. One woman was still in high school at the age of nineteen; eleven had not finished high school; ten women either had taken college courses or were still in college; fourteen had obtained their college degree; and at least five women had a graduate-level degree, including

two women with doctorates. Seventeen women, including some with college degrees, lived in *bairros populares*; twelve lived in mixed working-class/middle-class neighborhoods; and nine lived in *bairros nobres* (upper-middle-class neighborhoods).[41] Fourteen women were unemployed and/or only had part-time temporary jobs; seven had part-time jobs (some professional, some not); seven held professional positions in the government, private sector, or in academia; two were successful businesswomen; one woman was a waitress; and the rest of the women (seven) did not work but were either retired, students who had scholarships, and/or were women who lived comfortably with their parents.[42] Lastly, all the self-identified white women in the study and a couple of the light brown–skinned women were middle- to upper-middle-class women, reflecting the reality of racial and class stratification in Salvador and the rest of Brazil. The demographic profiles of the thirty-eight lesbian and *entendida* women in my study—their diverse skin tones, color hues, socioeconomic statuses, educational backgrounds, gender identities, political affiliations, marital statuses, and sexual identities—provide a strong basis for understanding, broadly, the shared experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador. Despite the differences among the lesbian and *entendida* women in this ethnography, there were two experiences that were shared by women of very different backgrounds in the study: infidelity and IPV. Twenty-two of the thirty-eight lesbian and *entendida* women had engaged in extrarelational sexual activities—that is, sexual betrayal. Twenty-three women had been involved in at least one physical (aggressive) encounter with their past or present girlfriend, wife, or lover.

Chapter Outline

In order to understand lesbian and *entendida* women's experiences with infidelity and IPV, I have divided this ethnography into five chapters. Chapter 1, "Life in Brazil, Life in Salvador," historicizes the lived realities of the women in my study by focusing on the relationship between nationalist ideologies and the development of the notion of Brazilian emotionality; race, gender, and socioeconomic conditions in Brazil; Afro-Brazilian culture, including the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé in Salvador; and the LGBT movements in Brazil, with a particular focus on its history in Salvador. While issues dealing with race relations affect the lives of many of the women in my study who are black, an analysis of the LGBT movements in Brazil and in Salvador is also warranted because "lesbophobia" is a part of Brazilian culture and everyday life in the city. Chapter 2, "City of Invisible Women," analyzes through medical anthropological theories and queer linguistics the phenomenon of lesbian invisibility in Salvador and throughout Brazilian society. Since "lesbian invisibility" is both culturally mandated and self-imposed, this process of socialization

illustrates the effects of "cultural censorship" on lesbian women, to borrow from Robin Sheriff's argument about the cultural censorship surrounding race in Brazilian society (2001). Furthermore, I posit that lesbian and *entendida* women's internalization of these cultural ideologies of female self-regulation and restraint can be identified as both a social product and an internalized form of "social violence" (Kleinman 1999; Kleinman et al. 1997). Despite the impact of social violence in the lives of lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil, in Chapter 3, "Phantasmal Sexualities and Erotic Embodiment," I argue that lesbian and *entendida* women have greater ability than women in heterosexual relationships to negotiate the competing Brazilian ideologies that encompass feminine passivity and Brazilian emotionality. This analysis of women's sexual and erotic practices with other women evinces how lesbian women both disrupt and reinforce dominant cultural ideologies through their sexual decision making. Throughout my discussion of the sexual practices and perspectives of the lesbian and *entendida* women I encountered in Salvador, I discuss the notion of "erotic embodiment." With this notion, influenced by the theories of Richard Parker and Thomas Csordas, I attempt to reach beyond the limitations or lost opportunities that are implicit in each of these scholars' theories. Accordingly, I contemplate women's sexual experiences based on the idea that women's individuality and their positionality in specific racialized, sexualized, and gendered spaces have had a tremendous impact in their embodiment of sexual and erotic pleasures. One consequence of lesbian women's relative freedom to play with or against sexual and gender norms in Brazil is the phenomenon of infidelity or "sexual betrayal" in their relationships with each other. Besides the discussion of infidelity in Chapter 4, "Violence, Passion, and Power: A Love Story," I also illustrate how Brazilian emotionality and erotic embodiment are amoral forces that contribute, among other factors, to the presence of IPV in lesbian relationships. While the causes for IPV encompass factors unrelated to emotional excitability, a discussion of Brazilian emotionality enables a wider discussion of IPV in Brazilian society. The pervasiveness of these Brazilian cultural and sexual ideologies elide gender divides; masculine and feminine lesbian and *entendida* women alike were perpetrators of IPV among the women I encountered in Salvador. Fundamentally, this ethnography contends that physical aggression is more than a masculinist or androcentric enterprise. For some women, the desire to display sentiments, including jealousy, anger, and even love—and doing so through physical force—was not dependent on gender or sexuality. Chapter 5, "Intimate Partner Violence, Government Intervention, and Civil Society," broadens the ethnography in its discussion of the societal ramifications of IPV in Brazil for women in heterosexual relationships and for women in same-sex ones as well. By examining the creation of women's police stations and the Brazilian government's major legislative responses to IPV, specifically Law 9.099/95

and the Maria da Penha Law, I illustrate the role of what James Holston has called Brazil's "disjunctive democracy" in the unequal distribution of citizenship. Women's police stations and the Maria da Penha Law, I argue, rest upon heteronormative understandings of citizenship that ultimately are gendered and sexualized to not only benefit but also disadvantage heterosexual women. Furthermore, women's police stations have androcentric and masculinist orientations that greatly affect how policewomen in these stations perceive and interact with battered women. Together, these realities do not foster an environment for accepting and adequately treating lesbian women who are victims of IPV. Consequently, while lesbian and *entendida* women are women who have seemingly abandoned the confines of heteronormativity, they must still grapple with the heteronormative structure of women's police stations when they want to be recognized by the state as *female* citizens. As a result, the gendered citizenship that is afforded lesbian and *entendida* women is innately heteronormative in its nature. Finally, in the Conclusion, "At the Gates of Nineveh," I reflect on my own struggles with conducting research on the subject of IPV, noting the challenges of producing an ethnography that neither portrays Brazilian lesbian women as "violent femmes" nor downplays their violent altercations. By describing and analyzing the fullness of lesbian and *entendida* women's experiences in Salvador, this ethnography illustrates that the phantasmal existence of lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazilian society can be both a liberating and a precarious state of being.

CHAPTER 1

Life in Brazil, Life in Salvador

Samba, parades, scantily clad women, and ostentatious behavior: these words are synonymous with Carnaval in Brazil and even with the country itself. This global perception of Brazil as a land of sensuality, decadence, and beauty, which is exemplified through the phenomenon of Carnaval, only captures the superficial, albeit fantastic, aspects of everyday life in Brazil.[1] Furthermore, this narrow focus on Carnaval can lead to misconceptions about Brazilian culture's tolerance of male same-sex sexuality, transgender issues, and same-sex sexuality in general. In a critique of foreign observations about Carnaval, James Green argues in *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil*: "For many foreign observers . . . these varied images of uninhibited and licentious Brazilian homosexuals who express sensuality, sexuality, or camp during Carnival festivities have come to be equated with an alleged cultural and social toleration for homosexuality and bisexuality in that country" (1999a:3). Similarly, a simplistic understanding of Carnaval as proof of Brazil's success as a "racial democracy" ignores the important political, social, cultural, and economic issues that are apparent in the production and execution of this festival throughout the country (Pravaz 2008b). The racialized, gendered, sexualized, and class-stratified aspects of Carnaval are the legacies of early forms of nationalist rhetoric in Brazil, particularly those ideologies that were produced at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth century (Costa 2000; Costa 2007; Ferreira 2005; Matta 1991). For example, the role of the *mulata* (a sensual brown-skinned woman) as the queen of Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro illustrates the essential *and* essentializing space that brown-skinned women occupy within the Brazilian imagination (Pravaz 2008a; Pravaz 2012; Souza 2013). Cultural notions about sexual desirability greatly influence the specific types of women who are deemed worthy of being featured during this festival. This adoration of the *mulata* in Rio's Carnaval is juxtaposed with the emphasis on African pride and Afro-Brazilian culture in

Salvador's Carnaval (Davis 1999; Scott 2001; Williamson 2012). While there are clear representations of Brazilian "African-ness" and Afro-Brazilian pride in some of the *escolas de samba* (samba schools) parade productions (Araujo 2010; Rocha and Silva 2013), the notable differences and emphases between Carnaval in Rio and Salvador allow for a more democratized and "black" form of Carnaval to flourish in Salvador (Cavalcanti 1994; Menezes 1994).[2] As noted by Kenneth Williamson: "Carnival in Bahia surpassed that of Rio in popularity and attendance, in part because of its street, participatory style where musical groups paraded around streets followed by throngs of followers (as opposed to the parades in Rio witnessed mostly from expensive grandstands or TV screens), but mainly because of the successful marketing of black culture" (2012:261). As a result, strong arguments have been made about the co-option of Afro-Brazilian culture by dominant Brazilian society in both Salvador and Rio (Butler 1998; Hanchard 1999). Yet from an economic standpoint, the average (poor) *soteropolitanos* (residents of Salvador) are able to participate in Carnaval activities to a much higher degree than the average (poor) *cariocas* (residents of Rio de Janeiro), which has caused resentment and anger to arise among poor and black *cariocas* because of the "theft" of Carnaval from them (Sheriff 1999:20). The increased role of the Sambadrome (the stadium where the samba competitions take place in Rio de Janeiro) has effectively excluded the working-class, poor, and mostly black *cariocas* because Sambadrome tickets are very expensive. Thus they are relegated to watching the festivities on their television (Sheriff 1999:20). Economic realities have also affected the black movement's representation and performances at Carnaval in Salvador because *blocos afros* (black parade groups) have become more dependent on government and tourist dollars for survival, which has "muted their calls for resistance in their songs" (Williamson 2012:274). Considering the history of Carnaval in Brazil is so intertwined with the country's history overall, the varied interests that influence this phenomenon reveal the heart and soul of this society.

Carnaval, 2008 and 2009

I attended Carnaval festivities in 2008 and 2009 in Salvador and saw firsthand the racial, class-stratified, and gendered dynamics at work, and I also experienced the glorious and fun aspects of this festival. In Salvador, *camarotes* (balconies) are built as stand-alone constructions alongside the main downtown parade route or affixed to buildings in Barra, a *bairro nobre* (upper-middle-class neighborhood), and the location of the second main parade route in the city.[3] From the *camarotes*, celebrities and mostly white middle- and upper-middle-class Brazilians watch, sing, and dance as musical artists perform atop the decorated *trios elétricos* (large technologically advanced trucks that are used as a type of float

during festival celebrations in Salvador) that slowly pass by. Atop the balconies, those fortunate are provided with security, protection, and drinks. Of course, some people who can afford to buy a *camarote* ticket, which can cost more than the monthly minimum wage,[4] choose the risker option[5] of being in the crowd with the browner and poorer revelers. Another option for those with the financial means is to participate in the entourage of a musical group. People pay to be a part of musicians' *blocos* (parade groups) and march behind their *trios elétricos*. Usually, these *blocos* are surrounded by security guards who hold up ropes to separate and protect the *bloco* participants from the crowds. These and other recent developments in the celebration of Carnaval have led people to remark upon the commercialization of the festival, which is a distraction from sincere Carnaval revelry. Despite lamentations about the commodification and exploitation of brown and poor bodies during Carnaval, the festival also features the best of life in Salvador. On February 21, 2009, I attended the Ilê Aiyê parade[6] in the neighborhood of Liberdade, the largest community of Afro-Brazilians in Brazil. That Saturday night, on the streets of Liberdade, I along with thousands of *soteropolitanos* watched the Ilê Aiyê *bloco* march down the crowded streets with their singers, drummers, and dancers in colorful African-inspired clothing. I remember observing a sea of brown people of various skin tones, hair styles, and body types. In my field notes, I wrote: "It also had a pretty safe and calm vibe to it. There wasn't a lot of pushing and shoving and it seemed there were just a lot of neighborhood people, families and old people. It's funny how everyone knows the Ilê Ayê songs." The spirit of Afro-Brazilian pride was strong at the parade. Two days later, I attended the "Mudança em Graça," which was another communal celebration in Carnaval that involved the participation of local organizations, feminist and lesbian activists, and marching bands. Unlike the Liberdade celebration, there was more of a boisterous and raucous spirit to this parade in Graça, a neighborhood near downtown Salvador. Women held up signs with phrases written on them such as "my grandmother is a lesbian" and "Vulva Viva." One of my most distinctive Carnaval experiences happened at this parade.[7] Participation in the procession began to dwindle the closer we marched to the main downtown parade route, and the *bloco*'s noise level began to decrease. Then everyone noticed that there was an older white woman standing on her balcony, waving and smiling at us. Her energy was so infectious that the *bloco* began cheering and waving back at her, with smiles on our faces and laughter in our voices. As a black woman, born and acculturated in American society, I was surprised that the brown-skinned Brazilians around me truly seemed to enjoy and appreciate the "spunk" that this older white woman displayed. They were reciprocating her energy and demonstrating respect toward this woman of advanced age. There were no feelings of patronization, condescension, or exploitation in the air but rather a demonstration of joyous contact

between people of different skin colors and socioeconomic statuses. I have provided these descriptions of Carnaval celebration in Salvador to illustrate how Carnaval embodies the complexity of Brazilian life. As much as Carnaval mirrors Brazilian culture in the ways in which black and brown women's bodies are objectified, it also mirrors the sincere affability that is a part of Brazilian culture and life in Salvador. Furthermore, the sensuality, sexuality, and passion (i.e., emotionality) that are associated with Carnaval are inextricably connected with Brazilians image of themselves, revealing the nationalist implications of this celebration. In the next section, I consider the relationship between Brazilian emotionality; the creation of Brazilian nationalism(s); and racialized, sexualized, class-stratified and gendered discourses. On an experiential level, these discursive realities continue to reverberate in the lives of Brazilians, and their effects will be shown in an examination of the socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions of black and brown Brazilians or Afro-Brazilians in the country and in the city of Salvador. Lastly, I end this chapter with a historical analysis of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and *travesti* (LGBT) civil rights movement in the country, with a particular focus this movement's history in Salvador. Together these foci contextualize the personal choices and experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador.

Brazil and Nationalist/Cultural Ideologies

The notion of Brazilian emotionality has been employed by Brazilian intellectuals, scholars, artists, and government officials to denigrate as well as celebrate Brazilian identity. Though this ethnography does not focus on nationalism, it is necessary to discuss culturally pervasive ideologies like Brazilian emotionality, for example, in order to understand their role in shaping the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador. Furthermore, this concept is directly related to conceptions of sexuality in Brazilian society, notions that have been cocreated and comaintained with nationalist ideologies. Brazil has had to cultivate nationalist rhetoric that accounts for its history as the largest Portuguese colony in the world, its role as the major destination for African slaves in the New World, and its identity as a country of racially mixed people (Thornton 1992). Since the colonial era, Brazil, like other Latin American countries and countries in Africa and Asia (McClintock 1993, 1995; McClintock et al. 1997; Stoler 1995, 2002, 2006), has grappled with the racial and gender dimensions of its hierarchical power structure. European male colonizers were perceived as the dominant partners in relation to indigenous and enslaved women and even the colonized land itself. Consequently, these unequal statuses laid the foundation for "sexualized nationalities" in which masculinity, and at the time whiteness, were the prerequisites for full citizenship in numerous countries around the

globe (Sommer 1991; Parker 1992). In the Brazilian context, another consequence of these unequal relationships was the development of nationalist rhetoric that transformed Brazilian defects into national attributes, exemplifying the malleability of cultural ideologies.[8] Before Ernest Gellner (2005) and Benedict Anderson (1991), E. Bradford Burns, a historian of Brazil, identified nationalism as "group consciousness that attributes great value to the nation-state, to which unswerving devotion is tendered. The individual closely identifies with the state and feels that his well-being depends to a large extent, if not completely, on its well-being" (1968:3).[9] Burn's definition of nationalism highlights the highly personal and intimate relationship that a nation purposely attempts to cultivate with its citizenry.[10] Portuguese seafarers landed in Brazil in 1500, and the country officially became a Portuguese colony in 1549. Before the arrival of the Portuguese Court in 1808, Brazil was Portugal's most valuable asset. After the Portuguese monarch João VI returned to Portugal in 1821, his son Dom Pedro I declared independence and became emperor of Brazil (Burns 1970; Skidmore 2010). Dom Pedro I's act of independence symbolized a growing nativist spirit that was rooted in racialized tropes. As a colony, there was not a nationalist spirit per se, but the praise bestowed on the indigenous peoples of Brazil as "noble savages" illustrated the early Brazilian colonists' affinity for their new homeland (Burns 1968:22). Following in Rousseau's footsteps, "the savages" in Brazil were thought to be far nobler than their Portuguese and European colonizers because they were "closer to nature," which also made them more emotional creatures (Rezende et al. 2004:110–11). This distinction between the "noble savage" and the "civilized colonizer," however, became blurred because of widespread miscegenation practices in the country. This mixing of the Portuguese, African, and indigenous peoples—the "three sad races" (Haberly 1983)—resulted in a weak, feeble, and vulnerable Brazilian populace; Brazil was a nation of inferior people (Prado and Calil 1997). In addition to being a land filled with sad and inferior people, Brazil had to respond to European countries' admonishments about its slavery practices and its continuation into the latter half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the Brazilian national image was further tarnished when the country was compared with the United States, the largest country in the Americas besides Brazil that was still a land of slavery. These countries were in a comparative tug-of-war to decide which nation was the worst master, directly having an impact on their national images abroad (Nava and Lauerhass 2006; Weinstein 2006). Regardless of who was deemed to have the most "peculiar" institution, Brazil came out of the nineteenth century as the loser in this bout. As a result, Brazil's response to these depictions of its people and accusations of cruelty and inhumanity was to counterbalance the African blood in the Brazilian populace with European blood. A policy of *branqueamento* (whitening) that began in the last years of the

Brazilian monarchy[11] continued after the official end of slavery in 1888 and the fall of the Brazilian monarchy in 1889. European immigrants were lured to the country in order to "lighten" the population's skin tone and elevate its overall status in the world (Azevedo 1987; Skidmore 1993).[12]

Inevitably, many Brazilian intellectuals, scientists, and scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had to grapple with the "mixed state" of the Brazilian people because miscegenation was associated with degeneration (Freyre 1946; Holanda 1936; Lima 1944; Nina Rodrigues 1932; Prado and Calil 1997). Rezende et al. note that some of the aforementioned writers, especially Freyre, Holanda, and Prado, were especially influenced by early European colonial travelogues that described "the emotional Brazilian" (2004:111). Differences abounded among these writers about Brazil's future as a miscegenated country, and a sense of bleakness and ambiguity pervaded many of their writings. Paulo Prado diagnosed the Brazilian people with a *tristeza brasileira* (Brazilian sadness) in his work *Retrato do Brasil*, which was first published in 1928. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda was more optimistic than Prado and concluded that the emotional character of the Brazilian people had led them to have cordiality and sociability. These national traits provided Holanda with a modicum of hope for the Brazilian people even though he also concluded that Brazilian affability did not lead to collectivism. While Prado and Holanda were pessimistic or ambivalent, respectively, about Brazilian identity, Gilberto Freyre provided an optimistic rebuttal to their assertions in 1933 (Lauerhass 1986:89). Unlike Prado and Holanda, his provocative embracing of Brazilian emotionality simultaneously allowed for the hierarchical positioning of white wealthy men as the "emotional" gatekeepers of the country. Gilberto Freyre was an American-trained scholar from the northeast of Brazil whose seminal work, *Casa-grande e Senzala* (titled *The Masters and the Slaves* in the English version), addressed the issues of scientific racism, eugenics, and disease. He concluded that the effects of slavery and the environment on the Brazilian body, and not heredity, were the roots of Brazilian inferiority. His Boasian approach was a pointed attack against eugenics proponents and the elites who were ashamed of Brazilian miscegenation and was an admirable attempt to situate the Brazilian populace alongside and not behind other colonized peoples in the world (1946:xxi, 279–99). Unfortunately, his argument was also couched in the language of sadomasochism, racial eroticization, sexual exploitation, and patriarchal privilege (Avelar 2012). In *Casa-grande e Senzala*, Freyre opined that Portuguese men were innately sexual beings who were able to control their "lascivious" natures while in Europe (Freyre 1946:96). Once they arrived in the New World without Portuguese women, Portuguese men were able to satiate their sexual appetites without restraint through sexual relations with the naked and "inviting" indigenous women of Brazil. Later, African slave women became

the submissive and masochistic partners in relationships with sadistic (Freyre's generalization) Portuguese men (1946:75–76).[13] For Freyre, the African female slave gave birth to the Brazilian *mulata*: she was the young Brazilian master's first lover and last mistress. Furthermore, the African female slave also gave birth to the *mãe-preta* (black mother; "black mammy"):[14] she was the Portuguese's man's breeder, his wet nurse, and his mammy. Freyre maintained that these sexual and maternal relationships became the bases for Brazil's problems as well as its triumphs. Despite the drawbacks of tropical living and even the complex relationship between Portuguese men and their African women, for Freyre, the emotionality of the noble savage and his African cousin was tempered by Portuguese masculine dominance and sexual (national) satisfaction. Brazil was a racial paradise that should be envied throughout the world.[15]

Alone, Gilberto Freyre could not have transformed the Brazilian cultural psyche or raised the country's self-esteem, and his gendered and sexualized reinterpretation of Brazilian history was part of a larger movement that had already begun to flourish in Brazilian intellectual and governmental circles. According to Susan Besse (1996) and Sueann Caulfield (2000), in the 1920s and 1930s, the Brazilian elite began to rehabilitate Brazil's national image by specifically linking women to the production and maintenance of Brazilian nationalism.[16] In Caulfield's historical work, she concentrates on the social, cultural, and legal preoccupation with young women's virginity in the early twentieth century, particularly in the 1920s. She notes that this preoccupation with femininity was inextricably connected with nationalism: "Many of Latin America's most prominent liberal nation-builders linked the notion of women's sexual purity, defended through patriarchal authority, to the advancement of civilization, social order, and state power" (Caulfield 2000:8). Etched onto these female bodies was a form of offensive nationalism that was forward-looking and optimistic as opposed to the pessimistic and backward-looking viewpoint of defensive nationalist thinkers. In addition, Susan Besse notes that Brazilian elites were also concerned with family life and strove to regenerate it as a sign of the progress of the nation. Even before the publication of Freyre's tome, Brazilians were searching for ways to rejuvenate their national image at home and abroad. Thus Freyre's optimistic perspective coincided with a new era in Brazilian politics. In 1930, a coup d'état established a provisional government under the leadership of Getúlio Vargas, and he became Brazil's first president under the new constitution in 1934 (Skidmore 2007:3–20). Even though Freyre was not a politician, his influence should not be underestimated because his work was employed as an effective tool in Vargas's offensive nationalism, which still influences Brazilian culture to the present day (Bocayuva 2001; Bocayuva and Birman 2007; Costa 2000; Lauerhass 1986; Passos and Silva 2006; Skidmore 1993, 2002). The political transformation of Getúlio Vargas in the 1930s greatly changed Brazilian politics

and nationalist ideologies, actualizing, or at least attempting to, Freyre's rhetoric into political and state action. Three years into his first presidency, Vargas overthrew his own government and established dictatorial rule in 1937 (Skidmore 2007:21–47). Under his authoritative hand and his *Estado Novo* (New State), cultivating Brazilian nationalism became a more central ambition of the state. The Vargas regime transformed Brazilian nationalism through the employment of several policies and initiatives: the use of corporatist tactics, the integration of nationalist propaganda into the educational structure, the assistance given to the poor and disadvantaged, and the promotion of Brazil as a racial paradise (Besse 1996; Burns 1968; Caulfield 2000; Costa 2000; Fausto et al. 2006; Lauerhass 1986; Nava and Lauerhass 2006; Needell 1995). This type of nationalist thinking was propagated through Vargas's moniker as "Father of the Poor" (Caulfield 2000:15; Levine 1980). Vargas was a father figure similar to a Mediterranean *paterfamilias*—a father and man who was honorable, virile, gregarious, and affectionate, yet fully in charge (Besse 1996:202).[17] Although Vargas's father figure did not share all the attributes of Freyre's patriarchal archetype, both representations did share an aristocratic mentality. While Freyre's book was a northeastern regionalist's take on the declining importance of aristocracy (Needell 1995), it became a blueprint for the development of a specific form of Brazilian nationalism (Telles 2004:33–38). Thus the Portuguese/northeastern patriarch of the "big house" was transformed into the Brazilian patriarch of the entire country. Getúlio Vargas was able to incorporate the patriarch ideal into his brand of Brazilian nationalism, which was illustrated by his title of "Father of the Poor." As Susan Besse states, "In seeking to bond the nation together, Vargas cultivated a spirit of communion between himself (male ruler, head of the nation) and the 'people' (socially inferior men as well as women and children, who formed the body of the nation) that obscured (although it never obliterated) conflicts between unequals and thereby reinforced vertical social identification over horizontal social solidarity" (Besse 2000:203). The patriarchal figure was central to Brazilian nationalist discourses and underscored the similarity between Vargas's father figure and Freyre's Portuguese/Brazilian male colonizer and master. In their schema, male figureheads dominated those who were considered inferior to them. In spite of their similarities, Freyre's notion of patriarchy was more heavily invested in notions of sexual domination and sadism. As such, the intertwining of patriarchal images enabled the production and promulgation of a male leader as the patriarch of Brazilian society who could subjugate and "woo" the Brazilian populace at the same time. The justification for this cultural interplay between political suppression and courtship rests on notions about Brazilian emotionality and beliefs in Brazilian passion and sensuality. Intriguingly, one Brazilian scholar, Claudia Barcellos Rezende, de-emphasizes these aspects of Brazilian emotionality in an article published

about the concept in English. In the next section, I analyze this article as well as another article by Rezende on the same topic in Portuguese. This juxtaposition of Rezende's renderings of Brazilian emotionality, ironically, demonstrates the cultural force of one of the very notions that she discusses in her English-language article: cultural intimacy.

Brazilian Emotionality and Cultural Intimacy

In the article "Stereotypes and National Identity: Experiencing the 'Emotional Brazilian,'" Claudia Barcellos Rezende draws on Michael Herzfeld's theories about cultural intimacy and stereotypes in her description of the experiences of Brazilian professionals who lived in the United States and Europe in the 1990s. She conducted interviews with twelve white middle-class academics (six men and six women) from Rio de Janeiro (2008:104). Rezende provides useful information and important analysis in this article, both of which have been used to supplement my own analysis about Brazilian emotionality. In her discussion of the transformation of this trait from an embarrassing attribute of Brazilian identity into a positive characteristic, she invokes Michael Herzfeld's idea of "cultural intimacy."[18] Cultural intimacy is as intersubjective as it is subjective; without the presence of the Other, no one is there to see you blush in shame *and* merriment as you share this moment of cultural camaraderie together. Intriguingly, Rezende's description of Brazilian emotionality indicates that this notion is no longer an example or illustrative of cultural intimacy: "The ambivalence present in the national narratives of the 1930s gave way to a re-signification of difference as privilege; to be spontaneous and emotional was no longer understood as a sign of inferiority but rather of superiority. Thus, if the process of (re) elaborating their national identity involved seeing themselves through the eyes of these metropolitan societies, the local stereotypes about Brazilians acquired new meanings and particularly new strength, making them a positive element present in the subjective sense of being Brazilian" (2008:118). Adjectives and phrases such as "warm," "very open," "hot," "physical," "emotional," "spontaneous," "affectionate," and "Latin lovers . . . We are hot!" (2008:104, 109, 118) were used to describe the Brazilian people in Rezende's article. The presence of sexual phrases and adjectives in this article, however, does not negate the overall asexualized quality to Rezende's rendering of Brazilian emotionality: yes, Brazilians are "hot" people, but they are very friendly, too! To be fair, this article is about friendships and not sexuality; nevertheless, how she explains the genealogy as well as the definition of this concept weakens her description of the power of this ideology. For example, the following quotes are from the section where she primarily discusses the history of the term "emotionality" and its meaning: "One of the pillars of 'authentic' Brazilian culture became the newly

valued racial and cultural mixture of Portuguese, African, and indigenous peoples, which gave Brazilians their hybrid quality. . . . Re-signified positively then as a founding myth, such mixture had for many years earlier anguished intellectuals, who took racial intermarriage to produce inferior beings. . . . Another important trait of 'national character' was the emotional 'nature' of Brazilians, often perceived as responsible for the crossing of social and racial distances. . . . Thus, 'savages' were more emotional and hence closer to nature, since . . . reason revealed the action of culture understood as civilization" (2008:110–11). Her description of Brazilian emotionality is in stark contrast to my own: she presents a "lite" version of this notion in her article. By foregrounding native savagery in this historical description of Brazilian emotionality, she elides the role miscegenation, Portuguese/white male domination, and most importantly, *lust* have played in the development of this ideology. Again, it is important to note that Rezende does employ words like "warm," "very open," "hot," "physical," and "affectionate" in her description of this national trait; however, where is the passion, the intensity, the ardor, the seduction, and the lust in her definition or portrayal of this concept? Conversely, in Rezende's Portuguese article, her analysis of the genealogy of Brazilian emotionality includes all its "lascivious" elements (2003). In the Portuguese article, Rezende analyzes the relationship between the notion of Brazilian emotionality and the works of Paulo Prado, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, and Gilberto Freyre, connecting the evolution of this much loved nationalist ideology to racialized as well as sexualized discourses. For these writers, the miscegenated history of Brazil produced a fierce, ardent, and emotive Brazilian populace. Accordingly, the elision that occurs in Rezende's differing representations of Brazilian emotionality is important because the impulsive, intense, passionate, and carnal aspects of this ideology are fundamental to understanding its role on both a macro- and microlevel. From a societal perspective, the presence of this national trait may cause embarrassment for the Brazilian elite because Brazilians are then stereotyped as a "sex-crazed" and impulsive people—the first component in the cultural intimacy equation. From a personal perspective, a superior sense of innate sensuality and sexuality would appear to be a titillating characteristic to embody for ordinary Brazilians who are poor, brown-skinned, and lacking cultural, social, and political influence in Brazilian society—the second component of the cultural intimacy equation. From a governmental perspective, the employment of this ideology is evident in its past treatment of Brazilian men's "crimes of passion" and "defense of honor" killings, which had the simultaneous effect of upholding male privilege and subjugating Brazilian women. Ordinary Brazilian citizens, as well, have economically benefited from this stereotype as seen in the growth of sex tourism in Brazil (Bandyopadhyay and Nascimento 2010; Piscitelli 1996; Piscitelli 2007; Silva and Blanchette 2005; Williams 2013). Based on these employments of

Brazilian emotionality, a quandary arises for Brazilian women, especially Afro-Brazilian women. They can luxuriate in the knowledge of their sexual potency and passionate nature even as they experience intimate partner violence because their partner, male *or* female, has acted impulsively out of jealousy and anger. Considering the typical living conditions for poor Afro-Brazilian women, their employment of Brazilian emotionality and notions about *mulata* sensuality as a form of social and cultural power is quite understandable.[19] Of the myriad factors that influence the living conditions of the average woman in Brazil, race is one of the most salient considerations because of the systematic disenfranchisement of nonwhite Brazilians that occurs throughout the country, which is particularly apparent in northeastern Brazilian cities like Salvador.

Race in Brazil

Negro, *preto*, *moreno*, *moreno escuro*, *moreno claro*, *pardo*, black, brown, nonwhite, Afro-Brazilian, or Afro-descendant. The plethora of racial and/or ethnic classifications in Brazil highlights one of the difficulties of discussing race in this country. Early in the Portuguese colonization of the land that would be called Brazil, Portuguese settlers copulated, forcibly and without much restraint, with indigenous and African women. Consequently, racial miscegenation in Brazil has had far-reaching implications for the *color* of the Brazilian population (Guimarães 2001; Guimarães and Huntley 2000; Moura 1994; Sansone 2004; Segato 2005; Sheriff 2001; Silva and Hasenbalg 2001). An 1872 census of the population of ten million Brazilians indicated that only 37 percent of the population was white, while 63 percent was considered black or brown (19 percent and 44 percent, respectively; Telles 2004:30). Almost 130 years later, and after an influx of European immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the 2000 census for Brazil was drastically different. The self-identified "black" population fell from 19 percent to 6 percent while the white population rose from 37 percent to 53 percent, and the "brown" population fell from 44 percent to 39 percent. Thus the nonwhite population—including the less than 1 percent Asian and Indian populations—stood around 46 percent (Telles 2004:45). These transformations in Brazil's racial demographics were not happenstance and reflected past Brazilian government policies to "whiten" the Brazilian populace. Despite beliefs in the myth of "racial democracy," the legacy of enslavement, governmental "whitening" projects, and a lack of concern for the poor and nonwhite (black and brown) Brazilians' lives have led to much inequality, discrimination, and injustice in Brazilian society (Bailey 2009; Lovell and Bercovich 1991; Marx 1998; Reichmann 1999; Schwarcz 2001; Turra et al. 1995; Venturi et al. 2005; Winant 1994). For years after the publication of Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-grande e Senzala*, Brazil was upheld as a racial

paradise by both Brazilian and North American scholars (Harris 1956; Pierson 1967). The publication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) study, however, changed how scholars thought about race relations in Brazil (Maio 2001). In the 1950s, UNESCO sponsored research in Brazil to study race relations in the country. Instead of reinforcing notions about Brazilian racial harmony, the research found that racial inequality was a major issue in Brazil. As a consequence, Brazilian and non-Brazilian scholars began to focus more on racial inequality from a structural standpoint, emphasizing the institutionalization of racism on a societal level (Azevedo and Wagley 1955; Bastide and Fernandes 1959; Fernandes 1965; Harris 1964; Wagley and UNESCO 1963). Scholars have continued to note the effects of racial discrimination in the lives of nonwhites in Brazil, which have continued to manifest in the form of income inequality. Brazil has the third highest level of income inequality in the world, and nonwhites are most affected by this disparity: the Brazilian National Household Survey of 1996 indicates that of the bottom 40 percent of wage earners, 52 percent are nonwhite while only 29 percent are white (Telles 2004:110). For nonwhite women, 60 percent of the wage earners in their female-headed households make below the minimum salary, which is not surprising considering that 56 percent of domestic workers in the country are nonwhite women and they only make up 23 percent of the total population (Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras 2001:10). These statistics are significant and meaningful for both *preto* (black) and *pardo* (brown) Brazilians because their incomes are roughly the same: black and brown families make about 90 percent of what white families make (Telles 2004:115).[20] There was no "mulatto escape hatch" (Degler 1971), a fact that had been argued by Brazilian scholars (Hasenbalg 1979; Hasenbalg et al. 1998; Hasenbalg et al. 1999; Silva and Hasenbalg 1992). In particular, for Afro-Brazilian women there definitely was no escape hatch as the disparity between the sexes extended to a disparity in the treatment of black and white women in the country. On average, black women in Brazil earn the least amount of money in contrast to their racial and gender counterparts, are more constrained in their ability to move upward in Brazilian society, receive the most inadequate and ineffective health care treatment, and are the most disenfranchised as Brazilian citizens (Bairros 1991; Carneiro 1995; Carneiro et al. 1985; Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra 1991; Lima 1995; Lovell 1994, 2000; Oliveira et al. 1995; Rezende et al. 2004; Roland and Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra 1993; Schumaher and Brazil 2006). In the 1970s and 1980s, black women were alone in their protest against these realities as they were unable to seek support from white feminists during this time period. Racism and a lack of interest in social and economic inequality characterized the white feminist movement at the end of the twentieth century (Azerêdo 1994; Carneiro 1999; Lebon 2007). In response to these realities,

black feminists like Sueli Carneiro and Theresa Santos created their own organization, the Geledés Instituto da Mulher Negra (Black Women's Institute) in São Paulo in the 1980s (Geledés 1991).[21] While the Geledés Institute worked on black women's issues in São Paulo, black feminists like Luiza Bairros concentrated their efforts in Salvador. In an article about the black feminist movement in Salvador, Cecelia McCallum discusses the racial divide that has characterized the relationship between black and white feminists in the city (2007:63). According to McCallum, despite the rifts and tensions between black and white feminists in Salvador, in recent years, they have been able to collaborate on specific issues (2007:80). Their collaboration, in fact, may be representative of race relations in the city of Salvador as a whole. Unlike cities and regions in the south and southeast of Brazil, the social distance between races in Salvador is not as wide or standoffish; Salvador is at once a city characterized by interracial sociability and racial inequality (Telles 2004:230). Considering the location, history, and culture of Salvador, it is not happenstance that the city is both the "land of happiness"[22] and the "land of inequality."

Salvador Da Bahia

Salvador da Bahia was the first Brazilian capital until 1763 when the central government was moved to Rio de Janeiro for military and economic reasons (Burns 1993:86). Once the bustling center of commerce in the eighteenth century, Salvador's fortunes began to fall upon the discovery of gold in the southern and southeastern states of Brazil (Burns 1993:70). By the end of the nineteenth century, Salvador and the northeast region as a whole had been economically surpassed by its southern neighbors, owing to the growing decline of the agricultural industry, the rising political and economic power of the south and southeast states, and the influx of European immigrants to these states as well (Burns 1993; Lesser 1994, 1999, 2007). In present-day Salvador, the effects of the northeast's marginalization are evident: black *soteropolitanos* have the highest rate of unemployment (26 percent), in comparison to black populations in the cities of São Paulo, Brasilia, and Porto Alegre (Telles 2004:114). Data from the same study found that for the nonblack populations in these four cities, the unemployment rate was between 13 and 19 percent. Another study based on data collected from 1996 to 2001 found that 15.4 percent of all residents in Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and Porto Alegre "earn a wage less than or equal to the minimum wage," which was in contrast to the rate of 33 percent for *soteropolitanos* (Neumark et al. 2006:143). Additionally, 51 percent of families in Salvador were considered poor, while the rate of poverty in São Paulo was 23 percent. Although the cost of living is lower in Salvador than it is in São Paulo, the existence of higher wages in São Paulo

offsets this imbalance. Thus from a socioeconomic standpoint, Salvador has one of the highest rates of poverty in Brazil (Neumark et al. 2006:143; Sotomayor 2006). Since blacks have a higher rate of unemployment in Salvador than nonblacks, it is reasonable to state that the vast majority of the poor families in the city are black, illustrating Livio Sansone's assertion that "color and income are closely related" (2003:31). For much of the city's history, an economic imbalance between its black and nonblack residents was also coupled with an overrepresentation of white *soteropolitanos* in municipal offices: "In the late 1970s Salvador was a center for an Afro-Brazilian cultural and political movement that has framed the national discourse of racial pride and Afrocentricity and has sparked an explicitly political discourse questioning the position of Afro-Brazilians in society (Agier 1992). All the same, whites hegemonically dominate the major economic and political positions in Salvador as in the rest of Brazil" (Oliveira 1999:169). Until the early 1990s, this cultural/ political divide was the norm; black residents still experienced intimidation, discrimination, and prejudice in the local political scene. In the 1992, the city council election marked a transformation in the racial profile of the city council with a significant increase in the election of black politicians (Oliveira 1999:176). Notwithstanding black *soteropolitanos*' gains in the political arena, racial politics are still factors in the campaigns for city office. Black candidates must decide how to tackle issues that involve race and have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of seeking the "racial vote" (Mitchell 2009).[23] The historical economic and political eclipse of Afro-Brazilians in Salvador stands in stark contrast to their cultural influence in the city—Salvador is the "African capital of Brazil" (Butler 1998:8).[24] The African roots of Salvador and the state of Bahia are grounded in several factors: slavery emerged as a Brazilian enterprise in this state, and for years, African slaves were highly concentrated in Bahia (Thornton 1992); Africans and their descendants formed fraternities and societies and were able to transmit, recreate, and innovate cultural tradition in the early years of their forced migration to Brazil (Bastide 1978); the continual influx of African slaves into Bahia until the early eighteenth century (Butler 1998); and the presence of transatlantic trading routes and dialogical exchanges between Salvador and Lagos, Nigeria (Matory 1999, 2005a, 2005b). Together these factors, among others, have led to the formation of Afro-Brazilian culture (music, dance, food, religion, and other social phenomena) in Bahia, and Salvador is the cultural epicenter of this movement (Kraay 1998; Sansone 2003). Furthermore, the heart of Afro-Brazilian culture in Salvador is Candomblé, the largest Afro-Brazilian religion in Salvador and in the country as a whole.[25] Many aspects of cultural life in Salvador, directly and indirectly, are connected with Candomblé principles, traditions, rituals, and symbols: eating *acarajé*,[26] listening to *axé* music, dancing samba, wearing white

on Fridays,[27] participating in the February festival for Iemanjá, and attending Carnaval are a few of the Candomblé-infused activities that *soteropolitanos* engage in on a regularly or yearly basis.

Candomblé

The Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé has been a "refuge in thunder" (Harding 2000) for black Brazilians in Bahia since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The codification of African-influenced and innovated religious traditions began in the Catholic and non-Catholic fraternities and sisterhoods, which were features of Bahian society during the colonial era. One of the Catholic organizations, the Irmandade da Boa Morte (Sisterhood of the Good Death) in the interior of Bahia (Cachoeira) began to incorporate Nagô (Yoruba) traditions and beliefs into their Catholic masses and processions. In 1830, several sisters abandoned the Catholic order and founded the first Nagô *terreiro* (religious house and/or center), which was called Ilê Iyá Nassô (Casa Branca do Engenho Velho) in Salvador, and this Candomblé house only recognized the Yoruba deities (Matory 2005a:122). This Nagô house, and other Nagô-identified houses, began to be grouped under the religious moniker of Candomblé in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In addition, other African ethnic traditions, most notably of the Bantu and the Fon peoples, inspired the religious houses that were formed and founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Brazil. Like the Nagô houses, these Angola (Bantu) and Jeje (Fon) houses were called Candomblé houses as well (Costa 1989; Harding 2000; Lody 1995). Of the three nations or sects of Candomblé—Nagô, Angola, and Jeje—the Nagô nation is the most influential and the largest nation in Candomblé, and the majority of this nation's practitioners reside in the state of Bahia with Salvador as its stronghold (Bastide 1978; Butler 1998; Harding 2000).[28] In this Candomblé nation, the deities are called *orixás*, and they are supernatural spirits, divinized ancestors, and representatives of nature. Humans do not have the same powers and abilities as the *orixás*, but they have an important and necessary role in the continuous revival and resuscitation of life. Regeneration occurs through the continual maintenance of an individual's relationship with his or her *orixá*; each is dependent on the other for survival. The focus on this symbiotic relationship between an individual and the divine is central to Candomblé because relationality and not morality is at the core of this religion (Capone 2010; Wafer 1991). Theologically, Candomblé is a religion that accepts anyone into its fold, regardless of their race, age, educational status, political orientation, and even sexuality. Of course, different nations, houses, and priestesses and priests have varying philosophies about whether or not to initiate particular people into their own establishment. Notwithstanding

these differences, generalizations and perceptions abound about the prevalence of gay men and lesbian and *entendida* women as practitioners of Candomblé in Salvador.

Same-Sex Sexuality and Candomblé

In the literature about Candomblé, two issues that have been intellectually and analytically intertwined are the claims that Candomblé is a "cult matriarchate" and a haven for "passive homosexuals." During the late 1930s, Ruth Landes studied Candomblé in Salvador, and she asserted that it was a matriarchal religion that primarily excluded men from the highest positions. She also argued that the religion stigmatized those men who attempted to become priests or initiates. According to Landes, only women should be "mounted" or possessed by the *orixás* because men would lose their virility if they were initiated. Hence, she argued, this was the reason that many male members, especially the priests, were "passive" homosexuals. Since its publication, Landes's seminal work has been hotly debated and critiqued.[29] The lasting legacy of Landes's *The City of Women*, according to J. Lorand Matory, is how the text was used to actualize the reality of Candomblé as a cult matriarchate and a "gay" religion, which he attributes to the following factors: the publication, dissemination, and employment of Landes's text by a variety of interlocutors; transnational and Brazilian feminists who sought examples of women's religious supremacy; Brazilians who wanted to foreground women's roles due to the perception of Candomblé as a homosexual religion; and priestesses who sought economic and cultural support from the government (2005a). Furthermore, Matory argues that lesbian women have had "success" in the elite Quêto and African "purist" houses in Salvador, and he cites the theory that lesbian women are more effective leaders because they are not burdened by commitments to men (Matory 2005a:213–14). While I agree that there are undoubtedly female leaders and members of the most established houses who have had female lovers, to categorize these women, particularly the priestesses, as "lesbians" inadequately describes the experiences of lesbian women who are members of these houses, and in particular, lesbian practitioners of Candomblé in my study.[30] Seven of the thirty-eight women I formally interviewed were members of different Candomblé houses in Salvador: two women were *ekedis* (noninitiate women) and five were *filhas de santo* (daughters of saint; i.e., initiated women).[31] Although some were quite open about their romantic relationships with other women and were members of a Candomblé house led by a self-identified gay man, the undervisibility of lesbian women in this religion was evident. In addition to living in a household with two lesbian practitioners of Candomblé for three months, I lived for another five months with Carmen, a female initiate of an elite Quêto house, and her

girlfriend in their apartment in a middle-class/working-class neighborhood in Salvador. Carmen had light brown skin and "good" (i.e., naturally straight and fine) hair and was in her late twenties. Unlike Carmen, her girlfriend, Dánica, had dark brown skin and wore her hair in small well-manicured "locks" that fell to her shoulders. One day, Carmen and I were discussing her *mãe de santo* (Candomblé priestess) and rumors about this priestess's female lovers. Carmen stated that it was common knowledge in her house that her *mãe de santo* did have romantic relationships with women, but the priestess did not identify as a lesbian or assume a lesbian identity. The priestess was an older woman, and typically women of her generation did not categorize themselves using words like "lesbian" or "*entendida*." In fact, many black female activists over the age of forty in Salvador still did not openly assume a lesbian identity even if they primarily had relationships with other women. It was common knowledge within the higher echelons of the activist circles that some had lesbian relationships, but they did not speak about them publicly, nor did they discuss to a great extent discrimination against black LGBT individuals in their activist activities. Thus the mere presence and perhaps dominance of women who engage in same-sex relationships in Quêto houses does not indicate that lesbian women are "visible" and feel safe to discuss their relationships within Candomblé. In an article about same-sex sexuality in Afro-Brazilian religions, Ralph Ribeiro Mesquita specifically focuses on lesbian women's undervisibility in Candomblé: "Until now, in our estimation, women are (only) women; even with homoerotic orientation, they are not lesbians. . . . The position of women in this space appears unaltered, nor substantially different from the expressions present in the wider society. They are the majority, numerically speaking, they occupy important (and necessary) positions, but, somehow, they have less visibility, especially when elements of sexuality come into play. Female homosexuality does not appear" (2004:113).[32] Numerical majority is not always a reliable indicator of visibility or status, which is evident when analyzing the experiences of black women in Salvador, and frankly, throughout the African Diaspora (Caldwell 2007; Carneiro et al. 1985; Collins 2000; Lovell 2000; Lovell and Wood 1998; Mirza 1997; Perry 2004). It is understandable that lesbian women in Candomblé behave in a more discreet and inconspicuous manner than gay men in the religion. Moreover, there are some houses, perhaps some of the elite Quêto houses, where lesbian women and women with female lovers have great latitude, discuss their intimate affairs as openly as gay men, and feel no pressure to be discreet. However, most of the women in my study, and most of the female practitioners in Quêto houses in Salvador, are not members of these elite establishments. Moreover, women in these elite Quêto houses still have to negotiate with issues surrounding visibility and affirmation because they are influenced both by Candomblé's religious ideologies and practices and by Brazilian

society and culture.[33] The experiences of some lesbian women who practice Candomblé could lead one to consider this religion as not being hospitable and tolerant to lesbian women and gay men. Yet from a religious standpoint, Candomblé has been at the forefront of LGBT rights and activism in Salvador and throughout Brazil. Furthermore, it is not uncommon in Salvador to have some Candomblé houses participate in the LGBT movement in the city. For example, Candomblé houses and other Afro-Brazilian religious traditions in Salvador have actively been a part of AIDS/HIV prevention and treatment campaigns (Silva and Guimara 2000; Mott and Cerqueira 1998; Rios et al. 2011).[34] Their participation epitomizes the impact and influence LGBT activists have had in Salvador and throughout Brazil.

The State of LGBT Life in Brazil

Even before the end of the dictatorship in 1985, LGBT Brazilians actively protested against homophobia and discrimination in their country. As a result of their efforts, the relationship of the Federative Republic of Brazil with its LGBT citizens has undergone numerous transformations in the last ten to fifteen years (Golin et al. 2002; Dias 2006; Moreira 2005; Moreno 2001; Nahas 2006; Rios 2001; Rios and Projeto Juventude e Diversidade Sexual 2004). An examination of LGBT history at the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century elucidates a complex and at times contradictory relationship that Brazilian culture has had with its LGBT citizens. During Carnaval, same-sex sexual behavior, practices, and even "cross-dressing" are accepted, sometimes celebrated, and even marketed to tourists as an example of Brazil's welcoming culture. Gay men, *travestis*, transgender, and transsexual Brazilians are allowed to display public affection, nudity, and ostentatious behavior. Moreover, it is also a space for self-identified heterosexual men to play with gender norms (Green 1999a; Kulick 1998b; DaMatta 1991; Parker 1999). Another example of Brazilian culture's apparent acceptance is the popularity of the LGBT pride parade in São Paulo, which is one of the largest pride parades in the world. On the legislative and juridical fronts, the country of Brazil has surpassed many other industrialized countries in its expansion of the rights and privileges granted to LGBT Brazilian citizens. Brazilian states and cities have laws that prohibit unfair treatment of LGBT citizens and grant same-sex spousal benefits to government employees (Dias 2006; Nahas 2006). In addition, in 2004, the Brazilian federal government created an "unprecedented" (Dehesa 2010:178) national program called Brasil Sem Homofobia (Brazil without Homophobia). This program combated discrimination against LGBT Brazilians through public policy implementations as well as supporting civil organizations and nongovernmental organizations that dealt with the cultural, educational, health, or labor concerns of

this population (Dehesa 2010:178–203). Even more demonstrative of Brazilian advancements in the area of LGBT citizenship rights are recent state and federal court decisions that have "recognized rights in the area of adoption, immigration, and child custody as well as the rights of transsexuals to change their name and gender on official forms" (Dehesa 2010:131). In 2013, Brazil's National Council of Justice (NCJ) ruled that same-sex couples could not be denied marriage licenses, enabling same-sex couples to marry nationwide. The NCJ's ruling followed the 2011 ruling of the Supreme Federal Tribunal, which had legalized civil unions for same-sex couples in Brazil. Their decision declared that now same-sex couples can be officially recognized as "family entities" in the country, which means that "a gay couple will be considered a family and the partners will be able to give one another an inheritance or a pension, share social security benefits and health plans, include the companion on an income tax return, as well as, in the case of separation, receive alimony and property. And as of now, a gay couple can adopt children and register them in their names" (Corrêa 2011). Fundamentally, the 2011 and 2013 rulings, as well as other juridical, legislative, and political decisions, demonstrate the significant advancements that LGBT Brazilians have made toward full citizenship (Moreira 2012). Unfortunately, despite the phenomenon of Carnaval and the recognition of LGBT rights by Brazilian cities, states, and even the national government, homophobia, lesbophobia, and transphobia continue to thrive (Mello 2012). Many LGBT Brazilians face familial ostracism, verbal harassment, and workplace discrimination (de Pádua Carrieri et al. 2014; Ramos and Carrara 2006). A recent study conducted in Rio de Janeiro found that 60 percent of the LGBT population there had endured some form of harassment, with almost 17 percent of the gay men interviewed claiming that they had been victims of physical assault (Phillips 2005). Research conducted at LGBT pride parades in Rio, São Paulo, Recife, Porto Alegre, and Belém between 2003 and 2008 by the Latin-American Center on Sexuality and Human Rights found that 70 percent of the participants in Recife reported being assaulted and/or discriminated against (Benevides and Galdo 2010). Furthermore, this verbal and physical discrimination and assault of LGBT Brazilians also includes murder: Grupo Gay da Bahia reports that between 1980 and 2009, almost 3,200 LGBT individuals had been murdered in hate crime–related cases (Benevides and Galdo 2010). Additionally, on a global scale, Brazil ranks as one of the worst countries in the world in terms of violence against LGBT individuals, and when these Brazilian citizens do turn to their local police forces, they find little sympathy, support, or action on their behalf (Constable 2007). To further exemplify the gravity of this situation, a Brazilian citizen, Marcelo Tenorio, became the first individual to receive asylum in the United States based on his claim of fear of prosecution because of his homosexuality (Brooke 1993). His case was quite significant because it

legitimized the claims that inequality and violence against LGBT Brazilians were systemic problems in the country. Accordingly, this juxtaposition of the juridical and legislative successes in the area of LGBT rights with the high rate of violence and homophobia against LGBT Brazilians invites serious questions about the efficacy of state-sponsored actions to remedy LGBT inequality and victimization.

LGBT Activism in Brazil

On one hand, the situation for LGBT Brazilians could appear bleak, but no more than thirty years ago, censorship and intimidation tactics were still employed against gay and lesbian activists by the military dictatorship. In contrast to this past antagonistic relationship between the Brazilian government and the gay and lesbian movement, their present-day relationship has evolved into a collaborative partnership.[35] In order to understand how this transformation occurred, it is necessary to briefly depict the developments in Brazilian politics after the end of Vargas's regime and the New Era in 1945. Once Vargas was removed from office, a new *new* era of democratization had begun in Brazil. This democratic phase in Brazilian history included another Vargas presidency (1951–54) and the industrious and prosperous Kubitschek Era (1956–61) (Skidmore 2007). Following Kubitschek, a military coup d'état ultimately set the stage for the development of the first gay and lesbian rights movement in Brazil. The military dictatorship began in 1964, and despite intense periods of political repression and censorship, James N. Green notes that "social and cultural transformations were taking place in Brazil that would affect notions of gender and homosexuality" (1999b:97). An economic crisis in Brazil in 1974 and the ensuing nationwide strikes in the latter half of the 1970s paved the way for the rise of "alternative or liberation" movements (Facchini 2005:55). The military regime's attempts to pacify the Brazilian citizenry in the late 1970s with the promise to begin a reform and redemocratization process in the country failed, and students, laborers, blacks, feminists, and gay and lesbian activists used this democratic semi-*abertura* (opening) to organize and protest against government policies, racism, sexism, and homophobia in the country (Green 1994, 1999b, 2010; Green et al. 2005). Gay and lesbian intellectuals had taken advantage of the "semiopening" that occurred after the 1974 elections, and their activities culminated in a 1978 announcement: "At the same time, in May 1978 a group was formed in São Paulo that was to evolve into Brazil's first gay liberation group. The group initially called itself Nucleo de Ação pelos Direitos dos Homossexuais (Nucleus for Action for Homosexuals' Rights) . . . The group's activities included study and discussion, militancy, services, consciousness raising, artistic activities, and nonverbal expression" (Green 1994:44). After changing the group's name to Somos: Grupo de Afirmação Homossexual (We Are: Group of

Homosexual Affirmation) as a way to "broaden its appeal" (Green 1994:45), discord among the members due to ideological differences led to an organizational split in 1980. According to Green, "In May 1980, Somos split over participation in working-class mobilizations and the role of leftists in the gay movement" (1999b:97).[36] Another split occurred that same year because lesbian activists were critical of the sexism in Somos, and they founded an independent organization that was later called Grupo de Ação Lésbico-Feminista (GALF: Lesbian Feminist Action Group) (Green 1999b:98).[37] These 1980 trifurcations of Somos were troubling signs for the nascent gay and lesbian rights movement in Brazil. Internal conflicts, a lack of financial resources and members, an ensuing economic crisis in 1981, a false complacency during the redemocratization process, and the effects of early neoliberal policies in Brazil were factors that led to dwindling activism in the early 1980s. Gay and lesbian activism in São Paulo and throughout the country was in a crisis (Dehesa 2010:18; Green 1994:51, 1999b:98).[38] Perhaps most importantly, gay and lesbian activists, as well as leftist activists, had lost their common enemy because the military dictatorship was on its deathbed (Facchini 2005:104). At its apex, the movement boasted twenty groups in 1981; three years later, only seven groups were left in the country (Facchini 2005:119; Green 1999b:98), and only six groups survived to 1989 (Facchini 2005:120).[39] In addition to the aforementioned factors that influenced the fall of the first gay rights movement in Brazil, the emerging "*peste gay*" (AIDS) epidemic greatly affected the lives of many of the male activists during the 1980s (Facchini 2005:102). While the AIDS epidemic decreased the ranks of the activists in the 1980s, the disease also provided an opportunity for a new phase of the gay and lesbian rights movement to begin in Brazil (Facchini 2005; Simões and Facchini 2009). By the mid-1980s, an awareness and fear of AIDS was a global phenomenon, and "when a second generation of gay rights organizations emerged, they integrated AIDS education into their political activity" (Green 1999b:100). As a result, according to Rafael de la Dehesa, gay and lesbian activists, especially gay men, were able to garner services and resources from the Brazilian government and the Health Ministry in the 1990s. The AIDS crisis had "made homosexuality a topic of public interest and opened new sources of funding from the state and international financial agencies and foundations" (Dehesa 2010:19). An umbrella national organization, the Associação Brasileira de Gays, Lésbicas e Transgêneros (ABGLT: Brazilian Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Association), was founded in 1995, and by the end of the decade, this group was the most influential in Brazil. Their influence was evinced in their partnership with the federal government in the implementation of a national STI/AIDS program titled SOMOS Project (Dehesa 2010:183–84).[40] Their collaboration with the Cardoso government exemplifies the close relationship that the LGBT movement has had with local, state, and national

government entities, culminating in the Lula administration's creation of the "Brazil without Homophobia" program. ABGLT was not the only group that was founded in the 1990s; other groups also partnered with local, state, regional, and national government institutions. Eighty-four groups were represented at the eighth Brazilian Congress of Gays and Lesbians and the first Brazilian Congress of Gays and Lesbians that Work with AIDS in 1995. In contrast, only twenty-one groups were present at the seventh Congress in 1993, which was the last congress held before the inclusion of AIDS as an issue on the congress's agenda (Facchini 2005:122). This participatory increase is just one example of the proliferation of LGBT organizations in the 1990s and into the first decade of the twenty-first century (Dehesa 2010).[41] In 2010, there were at least two hundred local, regional, statewide, and national gay, lesbian, transgender—and now—transsexual and bisexual activist organizations in Brazil that were connected with the umbrella organization ABGLT (Dehesa 2010:19).[42] Of all these LGBT groups, the oldest organization in Brazil is Grupo Gay da Bahia (Gay Group of Bahia).

LGBT Activism in Bahia

Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB) and its founder Luiz Mott have had central roles in the LGBT movement in Salvador and throughout Brazil.[43] For more than thirty years, through prosperous and tumultuous periods of its existence, GGB has been the cornerstone of the LGBT movement in Salvador. Luiz Mott, a *paulista* (person from São Paulo) who had moved to the northeast to teach anthropology at the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador, founded the first homosexual organization in Salvador and in the state of Bahia in 1980. That year was a critical one in the history of LGBT activism in Brazil. It was a time when the burgeoning movement had already begun to have growing pains and was in serious need of stabilization. Few groups survived after the early 1980s—and GGB was one of them. The organization was able to survive because of the efforts of Mott, who was also influential on the national level, as he "steered the floundering movement through important campaigns that set the stage for the movement to expand in the late 1980s" (Green 1999b:98). For example, as early as 1983, Mott and GGB fought and received a nonprofit organization status from the municipal government of Salvador. In addition, GGB was one of the earliest groups to conduct activities surrounding the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. Over the years, GGB has been involved in a wide variety of activities: workshops, support groups, educational campaigns, health awareness campaigns, activist protests, local political initiatives, the LGBT pride parade in Salvador, and Carnaval events. Of particular note are the published texts by Mott and GGB, which describe the homophobia and violence perpetrated against LGBT Brazilians.[44] Beyond the activism of Luiz Mott and GGB, other

activists and groups have also supported the LGBT residents of Salvador in the last twenty years. Similar to the 1980 break from Somos by lesbian activists in São Paulo, lesbian activists in Salvador decided as well that they wanted to have their own organization, a lesbian activist group that would focus more on the needs of lesbian and *entendida* women in the city.[45] Consequently, in collaboration with Luiz Mott, a lesbian activist named Jane Pantel founded the Grupo Lésbico da Bahia (GLB: Lesbian Group of Bahia) in 1995, and GLB was one of the first lesbian activist organizations in Salvador and Bahia.[46] As an off-shoot of GGB, GLB was first housed in GGB's headquarters in Pelourinho, the historic and tourist section of Salvador. By the time I visited Salvador in 2000, GLB had its own headquarters in downtown Salvador, which was within walking distance of GGB. Before I even knew about GLB, I had heard of GGB, and the first time I visited the GGB headquarters was in late November 2000. At the time, I was a senior at Northwestern University and was writing a paper about Candomblé and same-sex sexuality for my study abroad program. The leader of the program directed me to GGB and introduced me to Luiz Mott, the then-president of the group. After explaining my project, Mott introduced me to Zora Torres, the vice president of GLB.[47] In addition to Mott and Torres, several of the GGB coordinators were also extremely solicitous and assisted me in the execution of my research project. When I returned to Salvador in March 2001, they were as equally supportive of my project as they had been during my previous visit. I decided to return to Salvador because I wanted to interview female initiates in Candomblé since during my previous visit I had only interviewed one *mãe de santo* and one woman who was not a practitioner. Again with the help of GGB coordinators, particularly with the guidance of one of the group's resourceful coordinators, I was able to interview four more women for my project. A little over four years later, I returned to Salvador in the summer of 2005, and the LGBT scene had changed drastically since my last visit. Actually these changes began soon after my last visit; GLB had disbanded, and Zora had become the president of Grupo Palavra de Mulher (GPM: Woman's Word Group), an organization that was founded soon after GLB became defunct. Even though many women from GLB were involved in GPM, except for Jane Pantel, the group's mission had changed. Instead of a sole focus on lesbian issues and activism, they decided, for strategic reasons, to become a women's activist organization. This decision was based on the theory that they would have more access to government funds as a women's rights group than as a lesbian organization.[48] I received this information from GPM's vice president, Valquíria Costa, a former member of GLB and a longtime activist in the lesbian movement in Salvador. When I returned to Salvador the next summer, another major change had occurred in GPM. Zora was no longer president or a part of the group (she had moved to another state and city in Brazil), and Valquíria had become the president and

the sole person on the leadership staff of the organization. At this stage of the group's history, the organization had been on hiatus for months, and Valquiria wanted to transform the group back into a lesbian activist organization. By January of 2008, GPM had been renamed twice—from Palavra de Mulher (PM; Woman's Word) to Palavra de Mulher Lésbica (PML; Lesbian Woman's Word). Since then, Valquíria and PML have been through periods of activity and inactivity. The continual transformations that occurred in GLB/GPM/PM/PML were representative of the unsettled nature of lesbian activism in Salvador during the first decade of the twenty-first century. There was a general attitude among lesbian activists that GGB was not as focused on lesbian issues or activism as they would have liked, and they felt that the LGBT movement was dominated by gay men. To counterbalance this perceived domination, lesbian organizations such as Ajobi: Nucleus of Black Feminist Women and Black Lesbians and LesBahia were created. Similar to previous lesbian organizations in Salvador, these lesbian groups also had problems related to interpersonal conflicts, differing agendas and interests, and organizational difficulties. Equally important to the lesbian movement in Salvador was the fact that for many lesbian activists, lesbian activism was their passion and not the primary source of their income.[49] Thus job obligations, as well as familial responsibilities, have influenced the trajectory of the lesbian movement in the city. Another obstacle is the lesbian population of Salvador itself; some activists surmise that many lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador are not interested in LGBT activism or the creation of lesbian-themed educational or political events in the city. Lastly, many lesbian-themed events and meetings often take place in and around the downtown area of Salvador. The location of these activities can be logistically inconvenient for the vast majority of *soteropolitanos* who have to take long bus rides to the center of the city.[50]

Conclusion

The socioeconomic, racial, and cultural issues that have been described in this chapter underscore the realities experienced by lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador—poverty, underemployment, racism, sexism, homophobia, and/or safety concerns. At least one of these issues adversely affected the lives of the women in my study. However, to focus solely on misery, degradation, oppression, and marginalization as the life prospects of lesbian and *entendida* women (mostly black) in Salvador would be too limiting and confining. While Brazilian emotionality may be a double-edged sword for women, a widespread Brazilian belief in passionately living life is an integral aspect to life in this country and, of course, in "the land of happiness"—Salvador. Despite complaints about the commercialization of Carnaval, neighborhood festivities indicate

that *soteropolitanos* continue to celebrate the annual event. In addition, alongside the structural and systemic forms of oppression that lesbian and *entendida* women encounter are sources of strength and support for women—namely, Afro-Brazilian cultural traditions and in particular the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. Although Candomblé is not a primary topic of inquiry in this book, a description and analysis of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador would have been incomplete without a discussion of this religion because of its centrality in the lives of some of the women in my study and because of its overall influence in the lives of *soteropolitanos*. Another factor that influenced the decisions, choices, and experiences of lesbian and *entendida* woman in Salvador was the reality of "lesbian invisibility" in Brazil.

CHAPTER 2

City of Invisible Women

In a public discussion held in Amsterdam in 1986, two daughters of the African Diaspora, Astrid Roemer and Audre Lorde, discussed the phenomenon of female same-sex sexuality (Wekker 2001:156–59). Astrid Roemer is a Surinamese poet who lives in the Netherlands, and the late poet Audre Lorde was a daughter of Grenadian immigrants to the United States.

> **Astrid:** I do not see why it is necessary to declare oneself a lesbian. In the community from which I come, there is not so much talk about the phenomenon of women having relations with other women. There are, after all, things which aren't to be given names—giving them names kills them. . . . My not wanting to declare myself a lesbian is certainly not promoted by fear. I also want to remain loyal to the ways in which expression has been given from of old in my community to special relationships between women. Simply doing things, without giving them a name, and preserving rituals and secrets between women are important to me.
>
> **Audre:** I respect your position and I recognize the need and the strength that lie behind it. It is not my position. I think it is necessary for every woman to decide for herself what she calls herself, and when and where. Of course, there have always been rituals and secrets between women and they must continue. But it is important to make a distinction between the secrets from which we draw strength and the secrecy, which comes from anxiety and is meant to protect us. If we want to have power for ourselves, this secrecy and this silence must be broken (Wekker 2001:158).

Behavior versus identity, nonnaming versus naming: freedom for Roemer is oppression for Lorde, and vice versa. In the Introduction, I discussed Gloria Wekker's *Politics of Passion* and her in-depth examination of female same-sex relations in Suriname (*mati* work). Similar to Roemer's stance, Wekker emphasizes the importance of "relationality" and not "identity" in Surinamese sexual subjectivity (2006:68). Wekker is highly critical of the superimposition of American and

European sexual categories onto Surinamese women's sexual experiences with each other. Unlike Lorde, Wekker is less concerned with identity politics and perceives the focus on identity and naming by black lesbian women in the United States as a by-product of their orientation toward Eurocentrism and middle-class anxieties about conformity and respectability (2001:159–61). On the other hand, *mati-ism* in Suriname reflects an Afro-centric and working-class orientation in which Surinamese women have a more intersubjective understanding of the "self" and the importance of female homosociality (2001:149; 2006:220). Despite Wekker's critique of black lesbian identity, she also suggests that fear may be a reason that Surinamese women do not want to identify as lesbian: "In a society in which the avenues to status for working-class women are limited, it would not seem wise to declare oneself openly and thereby alienate potential personnel, men and women, from one's network" (2001:161). For Audre Lorde, however, the recognition of fear as the driving force behind this nonnaming is of the utmost importance to her, as she critiques the employment of silence as a survival tool. In fact, Lorde's response to Roemer echoed earlier statements that she made in a 1977 conference paper, "The Transformation of Silence into Action": "My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. . . . For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us" (1984:41, 44). There are liminal spaces of sexuality and subjectivity borne from tradition, borne from cultural notions of the self, and also borne from fear. Yet the divides between these spaces are not concrete, and the spaces themselves cannot be easily separated from each other. It is this tension—between the benefits of secrecy and the consequences of silence—that is the focus of this chapter. In this chapter, the stories of five women in Salvador, Margareth, Susana, Lucia, Lisete, and Sandra, are described and analyzed with a focus on their perspectives on lesbian identity, visibility, and the concept of lesbian discretion. Analysis employing medical anthropological theories and queer linguistics illuminate the ways in which lesbian women, *entendidas*, and other women in same-sex relationships are induced by both external and internal pressures to be discreet about their sexual and romantic lives. These pressures are rooted in Brazilian cultural norms about gender and femininity and produce a specific kind of silence in Brazilian society—lesbian invisibility. This form of silencing is both socially mandated and self-imposed, illustrating the influence of "social violence" (Kleinman 1999; Kleinman et al. 1997) in the lives of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador. Thus I argue that this social violence is an example of "cultural censorship" (Sheriff 2001) in Brazilian society. The chapter begins with a discussion of "queer linguistics," which I employ in an analysis of the Brazilian categories of *entendida* and *lésbica*, and the notion lesbian identity in Brazilian society.

Lesbian Identity and Social Invisibility

In the last thirty years, and surely influenced by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) rights movements in the United States and Europe, the word *lésbica* has become entrenched in Brazilian culture alongside the term *entendida*. As I explained in the Introduction, an *entendida* is a woman who has sexual and romantic relationships with other women. I was told that presently this term was used mostly by women over the age of forty, if they used any term at all to self-identify sexually. In contrast, the younger Brazilian women preferred the word *lésbica*. Regardless of a woman's propensity to self-identify as a *lésbica*, this self-categorization did not seem to have an overriding influence in her decision to *assumir a identidade lésbica* (to assume a lesbian identity). The expression "assumir a identididade lésbica" (Nunan 2003:126–32) is similar but not the same as the notion of "coming out" or being "out of the closet" in the United States. Unlike the American idea of "coming out," this Portuguese phrase embodies the Brazilian love for ambiguity because it conveys a sense of transience and choice; lesbian identity can be taken on or taken off just like a dress. Similarly, it is still common for lesbian women and gay men in the United States to use ambiguous terms in conversations with strangers about their same-sex lovers, like "my spouse," "significant other," or "they." Likewise, to assume a lesbian identity in Salvador is also a type of performance. A woman who has romantic and sexual relationships with other women occupies a different space within Brazilian society than a woman who publicly or even semipublicly (around family) identifies herself as a lesbian. "To assume a lesbian identity" in Salvador is a multileveled process, and similar to being "out" in the United States, there are gradations of openness. For example, I met a nineteen-year-old black college student whose mother did not know that she only dated women. Yet she allowed a picture of herself kissing another girl during a "kiss-in" demonstration to be published in the local newspaper. Instead of being worried that her mother might see the picture, as one might expect, she was rather pleased to see herself in print. Although this young woman's attitude about private and public behavior was contradictory, she served as a good example of how many women separated different aspects of their lives. Women assumed different behaviors and levels of openness with the various networks of people in their lives: family, coworkers, friends, friends "in the know," and lovers. When I discussed the concept of "assuming a lesbian identity" with women in formal interviews, I first asked them what this expression meant to them, and second, if they thought it was necessary. Three responses to these questions by Lisete, Lucia, and Susana, all of whom are discussed in this chapter, represent how the majority of the women I interviewed linked identity with awareness. Lisete, for instance, focused on the lack of subterfuge when one assumed a

lesbian identity: "Identifying as a lesbian for me is about not hiding anything. Because I cannot exchange affections with my girlfriend on the street. I hide my relationship. I cannot talk to other people about my relationship. I pretend not to have a girlfriend. I hide my identity. To 'assume' is like being like a man and a woman, being able to hold hands. If two women could do the same thing, that would be 'assuming' a lesbian identity." Lucia, by contrast, focused on family and work: "I think it is when you assume it with your family and the people who are most important to you." And for Susana: "I don't think it is necessary to say anything, but it is necessary to not hide. I think it is necessary a little bit in terms of living as a human being. Walking with your girlfriend, taking her to your house. Letting people understand, if you don't open up, people don't respect." Overall, their statements about assuming a lesbian identity focused on the performative displays of romantic affection or attachment to women. In the past, for example, only platonic reasons were considered when a woman walked hand in hand in public with another woman or if a woman was only friends with other women. In present-day Brazil, romantic connotations supersede or overwhelm traditional ideas about women's "innocent" friendships with each other. Consequently, younger lesbian women have less ability to "hide" in the open as easily as their older lesbian and *entendida* counterparts, which further heightens the importance of sexual performativity in Brazilian society.

An integral aspect of assuming a lesbian identity is to engage in "performative utterances" (Austin 1962), which have transformative effects in a woman's everyday life: "Performative utterances—such as *We find the defendant not guilty* or *Class dismissed*—do not merely describe the world, but change it; that is, performatives are linguistic social action" (Bucholtz and Hall 2004:491). For example, Brazilian women's verbal cues and expressions that indicate their involvement in a same-sex relationship—their use of the words "girlfriend," "wife," or "spouse"—are forms of enacting a lesbian identity in Brazilian society. Feminist scholars Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall have convincingly articulated the usefulness of what they call "queer linguistics,"[1] which they argue "puts at the forefront of linguistic analysis the regulation of sexuality by hegemonic heterosexuality and the ways in which nonnormative sexualities are negotiated in relation to these regulatory structures" (2004:471).[2] Instead of analyzing language as a marker for class, education, or ethnicity (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu and Thompson 1991), queer linguistics considers the heteronormative use of language as a tool that oppresses LGBT individuals (Levon 2010). In Brazilian society, for example, the language of love, sexuality, and desire are entirely grounded within heteronormative as well as androcentric linguistic frameworks. The effects of these linguistic relationships can be, depending on the woman, liberating or stifling experiences. For the black feminist lesbian activist Ernesta, the linguistic elision of lesbian women's experiences was a form of

discrimination that unfavorably rendered lesbian women invisible in Brazilian society. Furthermore, in her estimation, this type of invisible or implicit discrimination was worse than the explicit form that gay men experienced. In the summer of 2005, we had many conversations about lesbian activism in Salvador, and in one these conversations, she made this statement:

> Men are in public and women are in private and domestic spaces. This favors men, and they can construct a society that benefits them. Women always are objects of protection. They have constructed a great barrier, so with women they say they are sisters, *amiguinhas*. Two men are gay, *veado*. With women, it is a question of family, a colleague, or companion, *coleguinhas*. . . . When people talk about *amigas*, they never talk about women having an option for sexual and emotional relationships. There is more discrimination against women, without a doubt, because although men are more visible, you know who you are discriminating against. For women it is in our invisibility, we don't exist politically, we don't exist at all. Men have the names, they have identities. *For women, we don't exist, we are phantasms.*

I did not translate the words *amiguinha* (friend) and *coleguinha* (colleague) because, for Ernesta, the use of the diminutive suffix "*-inha*" was a sign that lesbian relationships were simultaneously perceived as intimate and trivial. She concluded that even though self-identified or perceived gay men in Salvador experienced more overt forms of discrimination, their status of visibility still afforded them opportunities that were denied to lesbian women. As a "visible" minority, gay men could organize themselves and openly declare their membership in Brazilian society. While Ernesta did not want to be stigmatized or experience more explicit discrimination in Salvador, she felt that the overt homophobic acts perpetrated against gay men were at least acknowledgments of their presence in the community. On a philosophical level, visibility was worth the price for Ernesta because she believed invisibility was a form of erasure. Ernesta's argument is similar to a statement made by Rosângela Castro, the president of the lesbian activist organization Grupo de Mulheres Felipa de Souza: "The major violence against us, lesbians, is the fact that we still are invisible" (Lessa 2007:26 [author translation]). The majority of the women in the study, including some lesbian activists, concluded that gay men, *travestis*, transsexual women, and transgender women were more discriminated against than lesbian and *entendida* women. Regardless of their divergent opinions, many of the women in my study commented or at least alluded to the social invisibility of lesbian and *entendida* women in the city. Women's opinions and reactions to "lesbian invisibility" in Salvador tended to be influenced by several factors: age, socioeconomic status, and familial history. In my fieldwork experiences, the

women who appeared somewhat satisfied with lesbian women's invisible status were in their early forties and older, educated, financially prosperous, and typically white or light-skinned *parda* (brown). Another influential factor in how lesbian and *entendida* women interpreted social invisibility was their belief or disbelief in the notion that lesbian women were innately discreet about their romantic and sexual affairs. For example, four self-identified lesbian women who were white or light brown–skinned, forty years of age or older, educated, and middle- to upper-middle class were the most comfortable of any women in the study with the association of "lesbian discretion" with social invisibility. In contrast, for their four younger counterparts—thirty-nine years of age and under, white, light brown–skinned, educated, and middle- to upper-middle-class women—the societal pressure to be discreet was suffocating and deleterious to their emotional and mental health. Additionally, for those who did not fit into all the aforementioned demographic categories, they had differing levels of openness about their romantic lives in public and private interactions. Despite the diversity among women's experiences, I observed that the five forty-years-and-older black lesbian and *entendida* women in the study assumed a lesbian identity to a higher degree than any of their nonblack counterparts. Of course, it should be noted that three of these five women were masculine lesbian women, another was a lesbian activist, and the last woman was a black activist. Notwithstanding these important differences, based on my research in Salvador, it would not have been a foregone conclusion that lesbian activists would assume a lesbian identity. For example, later in the chapter, I discuss the experiences of Sandra, a former lesbian activist. During her years of involvement in the lesbian movement, she was not open about her romantic relationships with women with her closest (emotionally) family members. Along with a discussion of Sandra's life, the next section of this chapter explores how four other women—Margareth, Susana, Lucia, and Lisete—of various educational backgrounds, skin tones, economic statuses, and backgrounds dealt with family, work, and everyday issues as self-identified lesbian women in Salvador.[3]

Silence as a Choice

Margareth

I was in the elevator riding up to Margareth's fifteen-story condo in a large apartment complex in one of the most exclusive neighborhoods in Salvador. During the ride, Margareth subtly indicated to me her preferences in regard to the use of the word "lesbian" in front of her mother. Margareth was a tall—by Brazilian standards—woman who had long salt-and-pepper hair and slightly tanned skin; she looked younger than fifty-nine years old. When I first met Margareth, she had already heard about my research and was interested in being a formal interviewee

for my study. On the elevator, Margareth remarked that her mother had known for years that she dated women. In her twenties, Margareth was "outed" in a conversation that a friend of hers had with her mother. According to Margareth, her mother did not have a problem with Margareth's relationships with women. In fact, Margareth's brother was gay, and her mother had recently remarked to Margareth that it was good that her brother was no longer alone now that he had a "friend." "Friend" was the word that her mother used to describe her and her brother's same-sex partners, and Margareth also used this word in front of her mother as well. In conversations with me, Margareth described her female lover as her "*companheira*," which could mean girlfriend or platonic friend. The timing of Margareth's statement—right before I was meeting her mother—clearly indicated to me that she did not want me to use the words "lesbian" or "homosexual" in a conversation with her mother about Margareth, myself, or my research. (field note, February 15, 2009)

This conversation with Margareth was illuminating because when we first met, she told me that her mother knew about her female companions/girlfriends. Consequently, I was somewhat surprised by the unease she expressed about the use of the words "lesbian" or "homosexual" in front of her mother. For Margareth, this preference reflected her personality as she described herself as a "*mulher dura*" (tough woman) who was a naturally secretive person, revealing information about her personal life only to people in her confidence. Of the women I formally interviewed, Margareth was the only woman who did not want to be recorded. During our two interview sessions, I took notes during and after each session According to Margareth, her friends had similar dispositions, and like her, they were mostly upper-middle-class to middle-class white and *morena* (light brown–skinned) women who lived in gated apartment complexes in wealthy neighborhoods. Because of their *postura* (comportment), Margareth stated that discrimination based on knowledge of their romantic relationships was not a problem for them. Fascinatingly, while Margareth stated that she had not experienced discrimination and that her family was supportive of her relationships, she did notice a difference in how they treated same-sex and heterosexual relationships. Over the years, her relatives interfered more in her romantic relationships with women than in another relative's heterosexual relationships. Margareth also noticed this pattern with her romantic partners' families as well. Despite these private interferences, Margareth asserted that experiencing discrimination was related to "how you lived your life" and whether or not you invited attention to your private affairs. For Margareth, she and her friends gave no cause by word or action for anyone to discriminate or disparage them publicly. Margareth asserted that gay men, on the other hand, invited attention, and most importantly, physical assault because of their behavior. Violence against gay men was such a problem, Margareth noted, because

gay men brought male sex workers into their homes who would then assault them. Besides the relationship between gay men's behavior, discrimination, and violence, she also stated that there was a connection between *popular* (working class/poor) environments and homophobia (her term). Thus Margareth, an upper-middle-class woman who primarily frequented middle-class haunts and had few gay men in her social circles, did not experience or *invite* personal discrimination into her life. Although discriminatory practices or homophobia against lesbian women had not affected Margareth, she did believe it was her responsibility to confront people if they made homophobic or discriminatory remarks against lesbian women and gay men. Despite her assertions of being a discreet person who was "not an activist," Margareth did believe in a form of personal activism. For example, Margareth proudly related an incident to me: the setting was a public restroom in a government building where she once worked. Two women were talking to each other, and Margareth overheard one woman tell the other that "homosexuals were not normal." After hearing this, Margareth interjected and stated, "I am a homosexual, am I normal?" Margareth told me this story on several occasions, a fact that unwittingly delineated how she too had experienced some form of discrimination because the "abnormal homosexual" of their discussion was in the restroom with them. Additionally significant was the fact that her sense of responsibility as a woman with a female romantic partner trumped her "natural tendency" not to reveal information about her personal life to strangers. This episode in Margareth's life illustrates the difficulty in not considering Brazilian norms about same-sex sexuality as a factor, perhaps even a significant factor, in Margareth's self-regulatory behavior. Margareth's own process of self-actualization, I suggest, and her public and non-public representation of herself as a woman who has female lovers was deeply influenced by cultural notions about the *abnormalcy* of same-sex relationships. Margareth, a woman almost sixty years in age, has experienced the changes that have occurred and still occur in public and semipublic discourses about same-sex sexuality. She was not immune to hearing disparaging conversations and comments or witnessing the derogatory treatment of perceived or self-identified lesbian women and gay men in Brazilian society. It would be presumptuous to declare without reservation that Margareth was in denial about the influence of a heterosexist and heteronormative environment on her thoughts about female same-sex sexuality. Nevertheless, I would argue that Margareth's self-perceptions and behavior combined with knowledge about Brazilian social mores validates my interpretation of the phenomenon of lesbian invisibility. She, like so many other women with female lovers in Brazil, has been socialized to value the ideal of personal and sexual discretion as *the* principle that should govern their social interactions. While it could be beneficial for my argument about lesbian invisibility to end my discussion of Margareth on a note of incredulity, it would be

a form of ethnographic elision because Margareth did not see herself as a victim of homophobia or any kind of discrimination. Moreover, it would be condescending to assert that Margareth was so oppressed by Brazilian society that she lived in a state of delusion. Margareth was like many of the other financially successful, nonblack or brown-skinned women over forty years of age whom I socialized with throughout my fieldwork experiences in Salvador. They did not seem to be or give the impression that they felt overly restricted or marginalized as women with female lovers. In fact, they, along with younger women who shared their demographic traits, had created a public "femme-sexual" community in Salvador. They not only congregated at the several *gays*, *lésbicas*, *ou simpatizantes* (GLS: gays, lesbians, and allies) friendly bars, restaurants, and clubs in the more exclusive neighborhoods in Salvador, but they also socialized at other public establishments in these middle-class neighborhoods. Their financial status and personal connections, as well as their skin tone, afforded most of them access to these places without fear of consternation or disapproval.

For the Love of Women

From a cross-cultural perspective, the experiences of Margareth and her friends echo Elisabeth Kirtsoglou's description of the lives of Greek women in her ethnography, *For the Love of Women* (2004). In a "provincial Greek town" (2004:1), Kirtsoglou studied a *parea* (company or group) of financially stable women who publically presented themselves as a community of platonic friends who shared interests, celebrations, and camaraderie with each other. While they engaged in romantic relationships with each other, they did not identify themselves as lesbian women for both philosophical and practical reasons. Philosophically, they rejected the reified notion of a lesbian identity because they perceived it as a "fixed constellation" (2004:148). Pragmatically, their avoidance of the label "lesbian" and a "lesbian lifestyle" enabled them to have social acceptability without the need to forsake homosociality with each other (2004:143). Furthermore, Kirtsoglou argues that women in the *parea* created and sustained an independent, yet socially acceptable "femme-sexual" clique because of their access to university education or their desires for upward mobility (2004:126–27). Similar to the middle-class lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil, women in the Greek *parea* used social invisibility to their benefit. The Greek women in Kirtsoglou's ethnography were also reconciled to their status of invisibility. Yet instead of a belief in lesbian discretion, they argued that sexual identity politics were rigid and constraining. Kirtsoglou also notes that the women in the *parea* were fully aware that their position in society undermined their ability to influence or transform prevailing notions about sexuality. Their powerlessness was a factor that helped to facilitate or even necessitate their rationalizations about "lesbian" identity and secrecy (2004:149, 153). Just like Margareth and her

friends, the women in the *parea* also acknowledged the presence of social and cultural stigmas about same-sex sexuality, and they admitted that it was a factor in their decision to be secretive about their same-sex relationships. Nevertheless, like their Brazilian counterparts, the women in the *parea* emphasized personal or philosophical reasons for justifying their discretion and comfort with social invisibility. Despite this comfort, for some women, life on the "fissures of the sexual economy" (2004:153) produced a paradoxical feeling of empowerment and powerlessness (2004:155). While these women at the edges of society were able to "work the system," the system was also working against them (Herzfeld 1997:202). Overall, Kirtsoglou presents a compelling portrait of life for women in this Greek *parea*. Their level of satisfaction with social invisibility appeared not to inhibit "greatly" their ability to socialize with and romantically date each other. Comparatively, social invisibility was an advantageous state of being for Margareth and her friends. In contrast, the pressure to be discreet and socially invisible was stifling for other women. In the next section, I describe the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women who felt anguish because of their invisibility. As a catalyst for my argument, the section begins with a theoretical discussion of the relationship between the cultural censorship of race and social violence.

Cultural Censorship, Social Violence, and Lesbian Invisibility

Brazil is a country that has an ambiguous and chimeral relationship with race, which is exemplified in the multiple "silences" that consciously and unconsciously occur in black, brown, and white Brazilians' relationships with each other. Scholars across academic disciplines, including sociolinguistics, communication studies, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, have grappled with the multiple permutations of silence as coercion (Jaworksi 1993, 1997), as an emotion (Saville-Troike 1985), as a sign of unequal distribution of linguistic capital (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991), as a means of censoring women's voices and thereby their agency (Aretxaga 1997), and as other forms of silence (Achino-Loeb 2006; Pincheon 2000; Tannen and Saville-Troike 1985; Wajnryb 2001; Zerubavel 2006). For the anthropologist Robin Sheriff, theorizing and observing silence is a "conundrum . . . because it is difficult to describe or define" (2000:117). Regardless of the difficulties of studying such a complex concept, Sheriff exhorts anthropologists and social scientists to deconstruct silences because "different groups, whether constituted by class, ethnicity, racialized identities, gender, or language, have markedly divergent interests at stake in the suppression of discourse" (2000:115). As a scholar of Brazil, Sheriff is interested in the concept of silence and its role in discourses about race in Brazil. Sheriff's argument is rooted in critiquing the prevailing myth of Brazilian

"racial democracy," a concept that has been heavily critiqued in academic circles but is still embedded in the Brazilian psyche (2000:121). It is a widely held belief that the vast majority of Brazilians have *um pé na cozinha* ("one foot in the kitchen"—that is, African slaves and Brazilian domestic servants work in the kitchen) regardless of their skin tone, facial features, hair texture, and body shape. Since no one is black and no one is white, "color blindness" is the norm, thereby sublimating discourse about racial injustice (2000:121). This sublimation, according to Sheriff, becomes internalized as a form of silence: "Silence, like discourse, must be deconstructed in such a way that these interests are explicitly located within a range of differentiated and opposed social positions in which both linguistic and nonlinguistic forms of power are distributed. Given its social and customary nature, I call this type of silence *cultural censorship*, a term that distinguishes it from the assumedly individuated processes that are often called 'self-censorship' as well as from the official, agent centered, and coercive (rather than customary) practices associated with political censorship" (2000:114). Thus cultural censorship is a subtle, yet pervasive, personal, and interpersonal mechanism that suppresses the discussion of racially charged incidents and comments in both social and private settings. Socially, cultural censorship involves an unspoken but universally known decree not to acknowledge racial discrimination; racism is not a subject to discuss in polite company.[4] Even on an intimate level, Sheriff observes that black *cariocas* (residents of Rio de Janeiro) do not discuss racism among themselves because of ensuing feelings of shame, anger, and pain. Conversations about race are not perceived as productive, and dwelling on racial prejudice can in fact exacerbate feelings of powerlessness (2000:124–25).

Social Violence

The negative emotions and reactions to cultural censorship are illustrative of the effects of "social violence." In the anthology *Violence and Subjectivity*, Arthur Kleinman's chapter, "The Violences of Everyday Life," aptly refers to the pervasiveness, the ordinariness, and even the devastation that occurs as a result of the deployment of macro- and microlevels of social power in individuals' lives. The impact of social violence may not be readily apparent because its reach is broad and insidious, affecting not only the lower classes but the middle class as well. Social violence is the confluence of institutional forces that adversely influence individuals' decision-making processes and emotional states (2000:238). An example of social violence is the cultural censorship about racism in Brazilian society. This phenomenon regulates, manipulates, and imposes restrictions on individuals' bodies and their subjectivities—the myriad factors that constitute a person's perceptions and actions in the world (Biehl et al. 2007). Furthermore, cultural censorship is a subtle form of social violence because it

has become internalized and self-perpetuating. When Brazilians avoid public and even private discussions about blatantly racist incidents, they participate in the reproduction of dominant cultural ideologies about race. Their decision to remain silent is rooted in external norms that have become a part of Brazilians' individual thought processes.

Lesbian Invisibility

The experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women indicate that there is a connection between a cultural censorship of lesbian relationships and social violence. Even though cultural censorships on race and lesbian relationships are not the same nor are they implemented in the same fashion in Brazilian society, I use Sheriff's notion because it effectively elucidates how women have internalized heterocentrism, heteronormativity, and fear, leading to their silence surrounding their same-sex relationships. The silence that women experience is paradoxically verbalized in their use of such circumlocutions as "friend," "companion," or "colleague" to describe their girlfriend, female lover, or wife. Furthermore, similar to how black *cariocas* feel in relation to racism and their silence about it, lesbian women also have feelings of pain, shame, anger, and hopelessness because of the cultural censoring of their romantic and sexual lives. Lesbian women's sentiments, I argue, are even more magnified in connection with their invisibility and further highlight the insidiousness of social violence as a form of violence that leaves its mark on lesbian and *entendida* women's lives. The experiences of Susana, Lucia, Lisete, and Sandra typify this relationship. In particular, for younger middle-class and educated white and light brown–skinned women in Salvador, the pressure to be discreet and socially invisible as women in same-sex relationships had devastating effects on their psyche. While older and younger lesbian and *entendida* women of a certain socioeconomic status traveled in the same friendship and dating circles in Salvador, younger women were typically less established in their professional careers, lived with their parents, and/or had just recently begun dating women. Consequently, their fear of personal and professional reprisals heavily influenced their desire to be discreet about their romantic affairs. Excerpts from formal interviews I conducted with two women under forty, Susana and Lucia, were illustrative of this reality.

Middle-Class and Familial Pressures

Susana, thirty-eight years old, and Lucia, twenty-eight years old, had similar backgrounds: they lived in the same upper-middle-class neighborhood; they lived with their parents and had at least one sibling; they graduated from college; they worked in professional fields, such as tourism, computer programming, or government work; and they began dating women in their early

twenties. Despite their similarities, Susana has had less job stability than Lucia over the years, she was ten years older, and she self-identified as a *mulata*. Susana was one of the more darker-skinned members of her family. As for Lucia, she identified herself and her other family members as white but not "white-white," she explained. Her differentiation between skin tones echoed sentiments that I often heard Brazilians use to distinguish between "white" and "white-white." The majority of the people who made this distinction were Brazilians perceived or self-identified as white. One of the most important similarities between Susana and Lucia was that they both had difficult relationships with their parents, which was due, in part, to the fact that they dated women.

Susana

Susana's relationship with her family, especially her mother, was fraught with tension because of her mother's suspicions about Susana's social and romantic life. Even though Susana began dating boys when she was thirteen, she always knew she "liked" girls, but only at the age of twenty-one did she have her first kiss and sexual encounter with a woman. Thereafter, Susana exclusively dated women, but she had never introduced a female lover as her "girlfriend" to her family. She was especially fearful to do so because she knew that her younger sister would not accept that she was an *entendida*. (Susana thought the word "lesbian" sounded like a disease.) Susana's sister was extremely, homophobic and Susana stated that she "wouldn't accept it, she is prejudiced. She says slurs and is hateful. She speaks with anger about it." Her mother was no more accepting than her sister, and she and her mother engaged in a fascinating dance with each other. Susana's mother feigned not knowing that her daughter dated women, and Susana volunteered no information about the subject.

> **ANDREA:** Do you think your parents think you date men?
> **SUSANA:** Eh, they want to think so. But deep down, I think they know. My mother probably, not my father who is cut off. My mother various times has come to me to talk about this. And I can see on her face. She doesn't come right out and say it. She'll say, "if you are that," and she'll cry and talk about it being a shame for the family. She knows, but she pretends not to know. She is always talking about men and fiancés.
> **ANDREA:** How do you respond?
> **SUSANA:** I would respond before, but now I say nothing, and if by now she doesn't understand, I am not going to go and say something. In this type of family, you have these cases because of respect.
> **ANDREA:** Do your parents know your girlfriends?
> **SUSANA:** They've met some of them, but nowadays I don't bring them to the house or speak Rosana's name. So I don't say anything. Sometimes my mother will ask me where I am going, and I say "out with everyone." But she knows

> that there are no men in my group of friends, and sometimes she says stuff about it being strange.
>
> **ANDREA:** Does your family know your girlfriend Rosana?
>
> **SUSANA:** Yes, before my mother said something, she came by and met everyone. But after an argument about distrust, she doesn't come by. I don't take her to my mother's house because of respect, because she [Susana's mother] is really aggressive about this.
>
> **ANDREA:** Does she know about you and Rosana?
>
> **SUSANA:** She came to know because she tried to find out information. She was "snooping" and she read my cell phone texts—actually, not her, but my youngest sister. One day, I was sleeping and my sister entered my room, and she read them, erased everything, and told my mother. I couldn't believe it, so my mother wanted me not to speak to Rosana anymore. It's horrible living at home. I have to look for a place to talk on the phone. Sometimes if she sees me on the phone, she gets upset, especially if she sees me talking on the phone for more than ten minutes. It is restricting.

Susana's situation with her mother was not uncommon among the women I encountered in Salvador and throughout Brazil; often, familial reactions and behaviors toward lesbian women were quite painful for women to endure because of the loss of security at home and pressure to be "good" (i.e., heteronormative) daughters (Toledo and Teixeira-Filho 2013). The quintessential "coming out" narrative that lesbian women and gay men have with their parents in the United States is a scenario that occurs in Brazil to a lesser degree.[5] Often, family members, especially mothers, were suspicious if their adult daughters had not dated men for a long period of time (usually over a year) and if their circle of friends only included women. Based on these suspicions, mothers usually acted in three ways: indirectly confronting their daughters, feigning ignorance, and/or avoiding the issue. In Susana's case, her mother mostly employed the first two approaches: her mother did ask questions but not pointed ones that would elicit the most direct response. Her mother indicated her disapproval of Susana's relationship with her girlfriend, Rosana, but she did not explicitly state the reasons for her disapproval. Additionally, unlike many mothers of women in this study, Susana's mother actively attempted to thwart her daughter's relationship through intimidation. Financially, Susana was in a precarious situation because she lacked a steady job for the past several years and received financial support from her parents. Emotionally, while she wanted to respect her mother's obvious wishes, she found it constraining and difficult not to be able to have a simple conversation on the phone with Rosana without being harassed by her mother. Consequently, Susana was discreet about her romantic life at home in order to maintain an acrimonious détente with her mother.

Lucia

Like Susana, Lucia was discreet about her romantic life at home with her parents; however, her situation was different because Lucia's parents definitely knew that she dated women. Several years earlier, Claúdio, Lucia's brother who was also gay, used his mother's cell phone and received an "incriminating" text message that his mother read. After reading the message, his mother confronted him, and Claúdio told her that he was gay. As his mother cried and screamed, Claúdio blurted out that his older sister was also a "homosexual," a lesbian. Because their mother believed that Lucia was supposed to be a good example for Claúdio, she was even more devastated to hear that Lucia was a homosexual like her brother. After this conversation, Lucia stated that she and her mother never talked about her love life or girlfriends nor did she bring them to her parents' house. Her mother engaged in the "avoidance" approach to handling the news about Lucia's and Claúdio's romantic lives. Recently, their father found out about their "homosexuality," but he did not know that they knew that he knew. This type of opacity was characteristic of the familial dynamics of other women in the study, as well. While silence, avoidance, and ambiguity were characteristic of Lucia's home life, complete discretion and invisibility characterized her situation in public and at work. I met Lucia one Sunday afternoon at the food court in Salvador Shopping, the smaller and more exclusive high-end shopping mall in the city. We sat at a crepe restaurant, which had few customers and seemed the quietest of the restaurants in the food court. Usually when I conducted formal interviews with a digital recorder, especially with women I did not know very well, I would ask them basic demographic questions to ease them into a conversation with me. At first, Lucia answered my questions after long pauses and seemed a little apprehensive about the interview process. Even before I began the interview, I noticed that she was anxious when I mentioned the words "lesbian" or "homosexuality." However, once our food arrived, I stopped the recorder and her demeanor changed. As we ate crepes, we chatted and somehow ended up talking about our families, both hers and mine. At this moment, and not during the "formal" interview, Lucia mentioned the incident that happened with her brother and their mother's cell phone. Despite her growing openness with me in her discussion of her family, her girlfriends, and even her sexual preferences, Lucia was very cognizant that we were discussing a taboo topic in public. Later that night I wrote in my field notes: "It was interesting that when we were talking about sex or the words 'lesbians,' 'gay,' or 'girlfriend' were used, she would lower her voice, whisper, and sometimes would look around. Later in the interview when I asked her a question about Brazilian identity, she thought I said 'lesbian identity' and asked me if we could discuss this topic another time while giving me a look." Lucia's behavior in a public

space with few people around was a clear indication of the level of discomfort that she felt about openly talking about her sexuality and romantic life in public. Her apprehension and nervousness were even present when strangers were barely within earshot.

It could be argued that Lucia was just a guarded person who was uncomfortable sharing private information about herself in a public area. Furthermore, the manner in which she behaved appeared to be indicative of much more than guardedness. I disagree with these assertions because her behavior was indicative of the degree to which she and other women were aware that they were acting outside of Brazilian norms. At home, Lucia had to be silent about her relationships with women. In public, unless it was a GLS-friendly establishment, Lucia had to be vigilant about any discussions that even merely included the words "lesbian" and "homosexuality." At her job as a midlevel state technocrat, Lucia had to be silent about her female lovers. Because of both her home and work environments, Lucia felt that she needed to "live a double life."

> **ANDREA:** You mentioned leading a double life? What does that mean for you?
> **LUCIA:** Living a life that is a lie, no one knowing you. For example, I told my mother that I was going shopping and later I was spending the night at a friend's house. And I didn't do that. It is always pretending. At my work, it is the same thing. A colleague at work will ask what I am doing over the weekend, and I say shopping or something. I never go out with them even when they call me. I always make an excuse. I pretend to be doing things instead of telling them what I am really doing.
> **ANDREA:** Have you ever invented a boyfriend for people at work?
> **LUCIA:** Yes, sometimes. Many times I just say that I am not ready to get into a relationship.
> **ANDREA:** Do you believe lesbians are just naturally discreet about their relationships? I have heard from other women, usually older, that lesbians are just discreet about their personal lives.
> **LUCIA:** I don't agree. At my job, a lot of the girls who work there are always talking about their husbands and boyfriends, even their penis size.

Lucia's comments about leading a double life and "no one knowing you" are revealing because often when I asked lesbian and *entendida* women if the people in their lives knew about their relationships with other women, women remarked that it was unnecessary to discuss this information. They responded that their romantic life was their private business and typically not a topic of conversation for acquaintances, strangers, or even with some friends. Lucia's experience at her job, which was probably not unusual, illustrated the difficulty in discerning the difference between discretion by personal choice and invisibility due to social and cultural pressure. It is inevitable that in certain social

situations information about one's romantic life would naturally be a topic of conversation. In a work environment, it is not uncommon for people, especially women, to discuss their significant others. A conversation about weekend plans with a coworker or perhaps an acquaintance necessitates some degree of divulging personal information about one's life. I raise these observations in order to highlight the degree to which Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women must feel pressure to obfuscate, omit, and lie daily. If Lucia was repeatedly silent or vague in conversations about her "significant others" and social activities, she would have drawn attention to herself and raised suspicions among her coworkers. Since Lucia was uncomfortable and even fearful about the possible repercussions, she felt forced to lie, to lead a double life. Lucia's and other younger women's apprehension about the workplace consequences reflected the influence of Brazilian cultural norms *writ small*. Furthermore, as twenty- and thirty-something women, they were also under more cultural pressure to embody femininity, beauty, and *availability* for men in their workplace environments than their older counterparts. Thus for these women, there was a difference between feeling discreet about and feeling inhibited from discussing their private lives in public.

Afro-Brazilian Women and Familial Pressures

The pressure to be discreet and socially invisible was not limited to those lesbian women and *entendidas* who were white, light-skinned *morena*, and middle-class. Black women, too, experienced this pressure, regardless of their socioeconomic status. One notable difference was that many of the black women who did feel this pressure emphasized familial concerns and anxieties more than job insecurities. Since many of these women lived with their families and/or received financial support from their parents because they were underemployed or unemployed, familial rejection and ostracism would have been devastating for them. Even if they did not live with their families, some women were also fearful of losing their close connection and relationship with their families, especially with their mothers. Lisete and Sandra were two black women who feared one or both of these consequences.

Lisete

I arrived at the mermaid monument in Itapuã forty-five minutes after 6:30 p.m., my proposed meeting time with Lisete; she arrived forty-five minutes later. Ah, Brazil! Lisete was a medium brown–skinned woman with seemingly relaxed hair that fell just above her shoulders, and she cast a slender and professional silhouette in her black dress shirt and three-quarters-length black pants. After we greeted each other, Lisete asked me what my research was about, and I began my usual description of my past research projects and my current fieldwork about

lesbian women in Salvador. In the middle of my pitch, Lisete interrupted me and told me that our mutual friend, Falana, had told her that I wanted to talk to her. After making this statement, she told me that she did not want her name used and was concerned about being recorded. I reassured her by discussing my policy of anonymity, and I suggested that we go somewhere to sit and talk because Lisete seemed nervous and hesitant with me. While we walked to a pizzeria familiar to her, I asked her safe questions about her background and the neighborhood where she lived, which turned out to be Federação. At the pizzeria, away from other patrons in a semilit section of the restaurant, Lisete asked me more questions about my research, its focus, and what exactly I was doing. Twenty minutes into the conversation, it seemed we arrived at a crossroads: if I did not pass her test, she would not talk with me. For the first time since we met in front of the mermaid statue, almost an hour beforehand, Lisete mentioned that she had a girlfriend (she used the word *namorada*). Her girlfriend would take her to parties where only lesbians, usually fifteen to twenty, were in attendance. Most of the women had dated each other, and Lisete thought this *troco* (exchange) was *nojo* (gross) because she did not understand why people would want to interact with their exes. She asked me what I thought about the idea of socializing with my exes. Instead of answering her, I responding by inquiring about her reasons for not liking lesbian parties. Again, she asked me the same question; finally, I realized, not only did I have to answer her, but my answer better be good or else our conversation was over. First, I said that I thought it was too complicated and caused problems to socialize with your ex-girlfriends; she agreed with me. Next, I stated that for some women their families were not their "families of blood" because their families did not accept them. Lisete agreed with this statement, but she also stated that she had a family and she did not need another one. I passed the test (I hoped), and we continued talking. Lisete still seemed reticent about discussing her life with me, so I talked more about my approach to this project and the interviewing process. Finally, Lisete seemed to be at ease with me. I am sure that it helped that I had become friends with her friend Falana, and she probably knew that Falana and I had socialized with each other several times after I interviewed her. Soon after, Lisete stated: "How would you like me to help you?" (field note, January 18, 2009)

Lisete was an educated thirty-four-year-old black woman—she had a college degree and was taking classes for a master's degree—who was underemployed and cobbled together different jobs to pay her bills. She lived near her mother, with whom she had a close relationship, and some of her nine siblings (all half-siblings). They often congregated at her mother's house, and she enjoyed their company. For the vast majority of her life, Lisete lived a heterosexual life—two short marriages[6] in her late teens and early twenties produced two children, girls, who were fourteen and nine. After these marriages, Lisete dated a lot of

men because she "liked to *ficar* [hook-up]." A guy here, a guy there. Only to *ficar*. When she was thirty, Lisete realized that she was attracted to women: "I began to notice that I was looking a lot at women's bodies. I began thinking about touching a woman, making love to a woman. I began to understand that, yes, I had this disposition. I began analyzing myself, and so I decided to look for women. I met this girl online, and we met in person, and then we began dating." Lisete's situation was unique in that few women in my study began having romantic and sexual relationships with other women in their late twenties, and many of them did not have children. In addition, Lisete was also different because she primarily lived in a heterosexual world—she had few lesbian or gay male friends and mostly socialized with her family or female heterosexual friends. Consequently, it was understandable that even though Lisete wanted to introduce Fernanda, her female lover of three years, as her girlfriend to her mother, siblings, and her friends, she had not done so. She was even afraid to tell her "liberal" university friends about her girlfriend for fear that word would reach her mother. So when her "girlfriends" discussed their boyfriends while they socialized at bars and clubs, Lisete joined in—just like Lucia joined her coworkers in discussions about boyfriends and penises at work: "I do, I do. I talk about things that I had done before with my boyfriends. Sometimes, when I am talking about doing things with Fernanda, I'll talk as if she were a man." It would appear that Lisete led a heterosexual life because she was so concerned about her family's and friends' reactions, which was exemplified by the fact that Lisete introduced Fernanda as her "friend" to her mother and her friends in order to avoid complications and disapproval. Lisete's daily actions, contradictorily, belied the presentation of herself and her relationship with Fernanda: Fernanda spent a lot of time at Lisete's home and would sometimes spend the night; Fernanda would go with Lisete when she visited her mother's house; Lisete regularly mentioned doing activities with Fernanda to her group of heterosexual friends; and Lisete had not introduced a boyfriend to her family and friends in over four years. Despite her activities, Lisete figured that since she had a lot of "hook-ups" in her twenties, her current lack of male companionship would be understood as her taking a break. Yet she also stated, "No one is stupid. They don't say anything, but they know." In fact, Lisete's mother had once asked her about the nature of her relationship with Fernanda. Even though Lisete denied that Fernanda was her girlfriend and lied (her words) when she stated they were only friends, her mother became "cold and indifferent" toward Fernanda after this conversation. Lisete felt that her mother was still suspicious and fully aware of the exact nature of their relationship. Lisete spoke of an incident that happened once when she, her mother, and her girlfriend were all in her mother's kitchen:

> LISETE: One day I was in my mother's kitchen with my girlfriend and my mother, and we were cooking. My mother was saying that "a man was born for a woman and a woman was born for a man. This business of two women together is a sin, it doesn't exist." She was talking about what she thought, understand? So if I said to her that I was dating a woman, I think that she would suffer a lot. I prefer not to say anything.
>
> ANDREA: But do you think that she knows?
>
> LISETE: She knows. All mothers know, girl.

This sentiment, that "every mother knows," was heard from the lips of many women I encountered in Salvador. It could be argued that this precarious game of ambiguity and silence between lesbian and *entendida* women and their family and friends simultaneously allowed them the opportunity to fulfill their romantic and sexual needs while also placating their loved ones. The experiences of some middle-class white and *morena* lesbian women in Salvador, like Margareth, and the Greek women in the *parea* are examples that support this argument. To end the conversation at this juncture would elide the real anguish women such as Lucia, Susana, and Lisete felt because of the pressures and inhibitions placed upon them on both a macro- and microlevel. Even Lisete, whose romantic experiences with other women only began when she was thirty, did not feel satisfied with social invisibility. When I asked her if she wanted to introduce Fernanda as her girlfriend to her family and friends, she said, "I would want to, yes, I would want to. Why not?" Lisete's question—"Why not?"—was not just rhetorical but a pointed interrogation of the notion that women with female lovers were inherently different from those women with male lovers. The question also interrogates the idea that somehow these women would not want to indicate to the people in their lives that they were in romantic relationships. Furthermore, Lisete's response hinted at her sadness due to the fact that she could not share this aspect of her life with her family and friends. This was a common sentiment among the women in my study. One of the consequences of social invisibility is an element of emotional invisibility, resulting in lesbian women and *entendida* women in Salvador hiding some of their joys and pleasures in life.

Sandra

This pressure to be invisible, to be discreet, even influenced the behavior of women who were lesbian activists in Salvador. Their desire to fight heterosexism and heteronormativity had to compete with deeply embedded cultural notions about same-sex sexuality and gender. Earlier in the chapter, I briefly mentioned a young lesbian activist who only assumed a lesbian identity in public. Her choice was not unique as I met other women in the lesbian movement

in Salvador who were in a similar situation. One of these women was Sandra, whom I met in 2005. Sandra had a bohemian air about her. She was twenty-five years old, had a medium brown skin tone, and wore her hair in cornrows. She tended to dress in flowing skirts and modest (by Salvador standards) tank tops and blouses that were African-inspired. She assumed a *negra* (black) identity. For the majority of her childhood and adolescence, she lived with her mother's sister, her husband, and their children in a city just north of Salvador. Her mother became pregnant with her at the age of eighteen, and after Sandra was born, her mother gave Sandra to her sister because she could not afford to raise her.[7] As a result, when Sandra talked about her mother, she was usually referring to her biological aunt even though her biological mother was still actively a part of her life as well. When I met Sandra, she was a scholarship student attending classes in administrative services at a private university in Salvador. She was also working as a clerical assistant at different offices and factories in the Salvador region. Sandra's demeanor as a stable and calm person suited her well because she often multitasked in order to achieve her goals and maintain relations with her three families: her immediate family, her aunt's family, and her Candomblé family. A further complication for Sandra was the fact that she had to assume a different level of lesbian identity with each of her families. When we first met, she was active in the lesbian movement in Salvador, attended activist meetings, and participated in different events. In conversations with me, she was quite vocal about the discrimination she perceived in Salvador against lesbian women. Despite Sandra's activism in Salvador, she typically did not assume a lesbian identity outside of her activist interests. Additionally, while her biological mother and her half-sisters knew that she dated women, it was never discussed. In contrast, Sandra's was even more secretive with her "emotional mother" (her aunt). When Sandra was eighteen, she decided to move from her aunt's home to her *terreiro* (religious house/center) and under the authority of her *mãe de santo (*Candomblé priestess) because she wanted independence—independence to date women. Since Sandra was still close with her aunt, she began to notice that Sandra had stopped talking about boyfriends around the same time that she had moved out. Over the years, Sandra stated that her aunt asked her "provocative" questions in order to ascertain if she was dating women. Typically, Sandra would try to avoid answering them or would lie to her aunt. While Sandra was discreetly open with her biological mother and completely silent with her aunt and emotional mother about her same-sex relationships, Sandra was the most revealing about her relationships with her spiritual mother, her *mãe de santo*. Sandra was an initiate of a Nagô house of Candomblé, which was located about an hour outside Salvador and near both her aunt's and her biological mother's houses. Living at the *terreiro* at eighteen, Sandra was able to explore her feelings for other women, which during this period were directed at

an older woman. Sandra's girlfriend called her often at the *terreiro* and visited her there a few times. Sandra's *mãe de santo* accepted the fact that she dated women, even older women, yet her *mãe de santo* did have a problem with the fact that this older woman had a husband and children. Although Sandra felt accepted by her spiritual mother, few of her spiritual brothers and sisters knew that she was a lesbian. She was especially reluctant to reveal this information to the *ogãs* (uninitiated male members) of her house because she stated that they were *machistas* (sexist) and homophobic. In actuality, the word "lesbophobic" may be more apt because the *ogãs* thought that lesbianism was more unnatural than the thought of two men together, and they would speak disparagingly about lesbian women in Sandra's presence.[8] For Sandra, the situation was made more difficult because she was the only lesbian in her house, and she did not know if there were any gay men in her house.

In 2005, Sandra was living a bifurcated life; not only did she have varying degrees of lesbian visibility and invisibility with her three families, but she was also a lesbian activist. It was difficult for me to reconcile Sandra's activism with her lack of transparency with her "emotional" mother and other members of her various families, and before I returned to the United States in the summer of 2005, I expressed this difficulty to her. In the middle of the food court in the largest downtown mall, Shopping Center Lapa, we renewed our previous discussions about assuming a lesbian identity. For Sandra, there was no dissonance between her stated commitments to lesbian activism and her silences about her relationships with members of her families. As a naturally private person, she told me, she personally did not feel the need to discuss her love life with people at her *terreiro* or with her acquaintances. In regard to her level of openness with her biological family, she focused on her transparency with her biological mother and biological sisters. Sandra no longer lied to her aunt about having boyfriends or being a lesbian, and she used avoidance and silence as the primary tactics with her. Nevertheless, Sandra perceived no incongruities between being a naturally discreet person privately and a lesbian activist publically. The pressure to be invisible was on a personal, and not a societal, level. Finally, at one point in our conversation, I presented her with a situation:

> **ANDREA:** When you were dating men, if you brought a guy home that you were dating, how would you introduce him to your mother?
> **SANDRA:** I would introduce him as my boyfriend.
> **ANDREA:** Okay, how would you introduce a woman that you were dating?
> **SANDRA:** I would introduce her as my friend.

After Sandra responded, she paused and seemed to comprehend the disparate "self" presentations that she conveyed to different people in her life (Goffman

1990). Her unconscious differentiation between her male and female lovers epitomized the extent and intensity of heteronormativity in Brazil. Sandra was not immune to this pressure to be discreet, as the ubiquitous belief in and desire for the social invisibility of lesbian and *entendida* women crossed racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious lines in Brazil. Consequently, the experiences of Lucia, Susana, Lisete, and Sandra should not be ignored or diminished even though there were women like Margareth and some of her friends who found social invisibility (relatively) acceptable and consistent with their personal natures as discreet women. While their experiences are relevant and informative, the mere existence of the unspoken mandate that lesbian and *entendida* women must be invisible needs to be questioned as well.

Conclusion

"The Brazilian notion of *tornar-se negro-negra* (becoming black) underscores the importance of a processual perspective by demonstrating that becoming black is an active process" (Caldwell 2007:127). Both assuming a black identity and assuming a lesbian identity are conscious decisions in Brazil because neither have the same value that *morenidade* (brownness) and heterosexuality have in this society. The Brazilian notion of "becoming" or "assuming" a racial or sexual identity is at odds with American understandings of race and sexual orientation—even the use of the word "orientation" in English indicates the directionality and finality of sexual identity. In Brazil, both identities can be "unassumed" by an individual, whether by choice or because of environmental factors such as location. Cecelia McCallum has argued that in Salvador, people move through "racialized spaces" in the city. The racialization of these spaces depends on social interaction, the parties involved, the location of the encounter, and people's own collection of experiences (McCallum 2005). Euro-Brazilian whiteness is hypervalued in some settings (e.g., *bairros nobres* [wealthy neighborhoods], boardrooms, *telenovela* sets, or the newsroom) and devalued in others, such as at an Ilê Aiyê musical rehearsal in the black neighborhood of Liberdade in Salvador (McCallum 2005:110). Similarly, heterosexuality, heteronormativity, and heterocentrism are also hypervalued in Salvador and throughout Brazil. Therefore, lesbian and *entendida* women must learn how to navigate through the city, knowing when and where to be transparent or invisible; they must negotiate *heterosexualized* spaces.[9] When deciding to focus on these particular women in this chapter, my goal was to represent my informants' common experiences with lesbian invisibility and the issue of lesbian discretion. The women I chose represented different age ranges, races, economic backgrounds, familial situations, and living arrangements. They were, however, all educated women. Margareth, Susana, Lucia, and Lisete graduated from college,

and Sandra was a college student. Of the four who had graduated from college, only three (Margareth, Susana, and Lucia) led a "middle-class" lifestyle—that is, they each had their own car, frequently socialized at restaurants, and lived in middle-class/wealthy neighborhoods. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, even though Lisete had a college degree, she only had part-time jobs. She was, however, more financially stable than many of the women in my study. In analyzing my formal interviews and field notes, I noticed that the continuous desire for discretion was more of a concern for middle-class women, most of whom were white or light brown–skinned women. Despite the fact that many of the working-class and poor black women did not publically assume a lesbian identity, they usually were more forthcoming with their families about their love lives. Roughly twenty-five of the women in my study, even those who were in college or had obtained a college degree, had come from poor and working-class families. Of these women, almost all, excluding three or four, gave their families indications, hints, or signs that they dated women. In addition, based on their interviews, it appeared that their families more readily accepted their same-sex relationships in comparison with the families of the middle- and upper-middle-class lesbian women in my study. Consequently, it should not be surprising that these white and light-skinned *morena* middle-class women had a distinctly higher level of unease in relation to the notion of lesbian visibility. From a socioeconomic and cultural perspective, as well, it is understandable that the middle-class women were more reserved because of the relationships between middle-class morality, social standards, and perceptions about same-sex sexuality (Mosse 1985). These values, however, have not remained in the middle class or influenced only middle-class behavior. Notions about lesbian invisibility and discretion are pervasive throughout Salvador and Brazilian society as a whole. Regardless of the backgrounds of Margareth, Susana, Lucia, Lisete, and Sandra, each woman had experienced at least one incident in her life in which she had to decide whether or not to be a visible lesbian/*entendida* or an invisible woman who had discreet romantic and sexual relationships with other women. For Margareth, her friends, and most of the older women (over forty years of age) in the study, social invisibility as women in same-sex relationships was not excessively constricting. Their discretion about their love lives was more of a personal decision than a societal imposition, echoing the sentiments of the women in the Greek *parea* depicted by Elisabeth Kirtsoglou in *For the Love of Women* (2004). Younger lesbian women like Susana, Lucia, and Lisete did not have this attitude, and they were uncomfortable with the lies, omissions, avoidance tactics, and subterfuge that they resorted to in order to mislead family, friends, and coworkers. Attesting to the potency of the cultural censorship in regards to lesbian invisibility are the experiences of Sandra, the lone lesbian activist depicted in this chapter. Sandra expressed opinions about discretion

similar to those of Margareth, and she also deceived her family like Susana, Lucia, and Lisete deceived theirs. Overall, Sandra's experiences are representative of the pressure that is placed on lesbian and *entendida* women to conform Brazilian society. She was a lesbian activist, educated, and a critical thinker, and she was still grappling with the degree to which she had internalized this form of silence after our conversation in the mall. It is doubtful that someone had ever explicitly told Sandra and other women that they should identify their girlfriends as their "friend" in front of their parents and friends. As women socialized in Brazilian society, they knew how they were supposed to act and respond. Of course, each woman had her own specific reasons for wanting to be discreet, and there were women who did introduce their female lovers as their girlfriends. Despite women's individual reasons for discretion, the cultural roots of lesbian invisibility cannot be ignored because this form of social violence— cultural censorship—inculcates Brazilian lesbian women's very sense of self. In their attempts to excise this "discretion," lesbian women are left with a sense of unease and a dissatisfaction that clings to them even as they try so desperately to explain it away.

CHAPTER 3

Phantasmal Sexualities and Erotic Embodiment

For the women in my study, one of their favorite sexual activities was the act of *roçar* or *esfregar*—a sexual act that involves genital-to-genital contact and/or genital-to-body (thigh, leg, or buttocks) contact.[1] The act of *roçar* epitomizes the possibilities of feminine pleasure between women, and the absence of discussion about this sexual practice in Brazilian sexual discourses exemplifies the overall level of lesbian and *entendida* invisibility in Brazilian society. The practice of *roçar* is not solely a Brazilian phenomenon; this practice is an example of "tribadism." Historically, women who were considered the dominant sexual partner during this sexual act were labeled "tribades." According to Valeria Traub, "*Tribade* is a French term derived from the Greek *tribas* and *tribein*, to rub—and hence the Latin *fricatrix* and the English *rubster*" (2002:253).[2] Historically associated with genital-to-body contact and not genital-to-genital contact between two women, tribadism was considered a threat to the established order of things. The "abusive" tribade was a woman, perhaps a "hermaphrodite," whose oversized clitoris provided her with the opportunity to imitate penile penetration and, therefore, masculinity (Braunscheinder 1999; Traub 1996, 2002; Vicinus 1992). For centuries in Western European societies, it was the tribade and not her femme partner who was punished by the courts and considered deviant (Traub 1996:24–25; Vicinus 1992:477–78). In modern times, tribadism is virtually ignored as a sexual practice among women: "If we trace the use of the term forward into the present, we find that tribadism is one of those rarely discussed but often practiced sexual activities, and the silence that surrounds it now is as puzzling as the discourse it produced in earlier centuries" (Halberstam 1998:61). Halberstam's observation is perspicacious: Where has the tribade gone? From a Foucauldian perspective, it is ironic that the tribade—a product of early modern medical and scientific discourses—was made obsolete once the medical community constructed

homo- and heterosexual identities (Foucault 1990). Intriguingly, the current incarnation of tribadism is disassociated from the sexual rubbing that was performed by the hermaphroditic tribade of old. When tribadism is discussed as a present-day practice, there is an emphasis on genital-to-genital contact between women (Amer 2009; Caster 1993; Rye and Meaney 2007), eliding tribadism's past association with heteronormative sexuality (penetration) and masculinity. For example, in medical research about lesbian and bisexual women's sexual practices in the United States and Britain, a plethora of sexual acts are discussed, including oral sex, masturbation, mutual masturbation, fisting, rimming, and vaginal and anal penetration with fingers and sex toys, as well as genital-to-genital contact (Bailey et al. 2003; Roberts et al. 2000). Despite the variety of sexual acts discussed, missing from this list of practiced sexual activities is genital-to-body contact. Unlike the Bailey et al. and Roberts et al. studies, the 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS) and the 2009 National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (NSSHB) were narrower in their focus on sexual practices (Herbenick et al. 2010; Laumann et al. 1994). The NHSLS was groundbreaking research that endeavored to map the sexual lives and behaviors of Americans (Laumann et al. 1994). Despite the fact that these were wide-ranging studies, tribadism was not included as a sexual practice discussed in either of population-based surveys. According to the authors of the NHSLS study, time constraints led them to limit their inquiry about sexual practices to oral, vaginal, or anal activities (i.e., "penetrative sex"; Laumann et al. 1994:65). While understandable, especially considering the intense interest in AIDS research during this time period, the lack of information about sexual practices specific to female bodies is noteworthy. As for the NSSHB, it was modeled after the NHSLS and covered virtually no new ground in the expansion of sexual acts discussed in its study. It could be argued that regardless of the reasoning, the exclusion of women's experiences with genital-to-genital contact in these studies limited their scope for several reasons. This sexual act was the fourth most popular sexual act among women in a British study and more popular than vaginal or anal fisting and masturbation with or without a vibrator in two American studies (Bailey et al. 2003; Roberts et al. 2000; Singh and Marrazzo 2009). Furthermore, a study of any form of tribadism does have medical relevance: genital-to-genital contact with skin and mucosa carries the potential risk of HPV, herpes, and syphilis infection (Singh and Marrazzo 2009:130). Marginalizing this sexual activity within medical discourses has ramifications beyond the realm of STI prevention. The exclusion of tribadism, even in its most modern form, from dominant medical discourses about sexuality reflects a cultural and societal ghettoization or even erasure of female same-sex sexuality. In addition, this erasure of feminine pleasure signifies the central and seemingly unavoidable role sexual penetration must have in sexual discourses.

In Brazilian sexual discourses, the importance of penetration surpasses even the American and European focus on this form of sexual stimulation. For many lesbian and *entendida* women in my study, however, sexual penetration was conceived differently from *roçar*, or tribadism. In the Introduction, I described the pervasive power of the active/passive sexual paradigm in Brazilian society. Men are the dominant/active sexual partners who penetrate their submissive/passive partner who can be male or female. It is not surprising that one of the largest Brazilian population-based studies of sexuality defined sexual relations as "sex with vaginal, oral, or anal penetration." Some scholars note that this definition of sexual intercourse could have potentially excluded women who only had sexual relations with other women (Barbosa and Koyama 2006:1512).[3] I would also argue that this definition excludes the variety of women's same-sex practices with each that do not include oral sex. Statistically, of the sexual acts enjoyed by the women in my study, digital penetration of the vagina or anus was their least enjoyed sexual activity. There also seemed to be less enjoyment of vaginal penetration for women in Salvador in comparison with statistics from other countries even though the degree to which women disliked anal penetration appeared to be on par with women's sexual preferences in same-sex sexual encounters in the United States and Britain (Bailey et al. 2003; Roberts et al. 2000). As a result, it was not surprising that dildos, vibrators, and other sex toys were not that popular among the women I interviewed.[4] In general, women gave mixed opinions about digital penetration, and some noted that ambivalence about this sex act was not uncommon among their lesbian friends. More popular than penetration were oral sex and *roçar* (genital-to-genital or genital-to-body part contact), which were both sexually gratifying practices for many women. For some women, their favorite positions of *roçar* were genital-genital or genital-thigh/leg contact. For others, the genital-buttocks position of *roçar* seemed to be a particular favorite, exemplifying the influence of anal eroticism in the country. Regardless of a woman's preference for a specific position of *roçar*, this sexual act was a category unto itself as women found different ways to achieve simultaneous orgasm and/or multiple degrees of enjoyment during this sexual encounter with each other.

I began this chapter with a discussion of the Brazilian phenomenon of *roçar* and an analysis of North American and European tribadism in order to demonstrate the underlying tensions that are represented—or ignored—in conversations about women's same-sex sexual practices. The very fact that there is a silence about this uniquely "female" sexual activity indicates the innate "trouble" (Butler 1999) that this sexual experience represents in a Brazilian context. *Roçar* embodies in its diverse manifestations lesbian and *entendida* women's disruptions and reinforcements of Brazilian cultural ideologies about gender roles, gender identity, sexual pleasure, sexual symbolism, and women's subjectivities as agents. Throughout this

chapter, I examine these relationships, seeking to develop the concept of "erotic embodiment" as a tool for analyzing the romantic and sexual practices of lesbian and *entendida* women. Before I employ this notion of erotic embodiment, I describe its genealogical roots in the theories of Richard Parker and Thomas Csordas. Although I am critical of Parker's ethnography *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions: Sexual Culture in Contemporary Brazil*, I recognize and appreciate his relevant observations about the different Brazilian subsystems of sexuality that interact with each other. While his "ideology of the erotic" is somewhat problematic, his focus on pleasure as a primary locus of significance in Brazil's sexual universe remains an important contribution to the study of Brazilian sexuality (Goldstein 2003). As a means of mitigating Parker's analysis of racial, gender, and class issues that relate to Brazilians' sexual practices and choices, I have turned to Thomas Csordas's notion of embodiment. By bringing together experientiality and cultural specificity, Csordas attempts to account for the subjective as well as intersubjective aspects of embodiment. I combine Thomas Csordas's approach with elements of Richard Parker's ideology of the erotic in an analysis of five lesbian and *entendida* women (Lisete, Rita, Alice, Roberta, and Falana) and their embodiment or disembodiment of dominant Brazilian sexual ideologies. A commonality shared among all the women was that they acted and understood their sexuality—to varying degrees— within the parameters of heteronormativity and androcentricism. Although their conceptions of gender roles and certain sexual practices were in the minority among the women I interviewed, this "minority report" has proven valuable. Since all the lesbian and *entendida* women I encountered were influenced by Brazilian sexual discourses, their seemingly rebellious actions were also defined and shaped through a Brazilian prism. Furthermore, even those women who interpreted their sexual practices in ways that reinforced Brazilian sexual hegemony also produced sexual discourses that reinterpreted and subverted this hegemony. The chapter ends with the story of Falana, a woman whose racial, socioeconomic, and educational background seemingly collided with her sexual desires and marital relationship. This analysis of Falana's colliding realities illustrates the precarious interplay between sexual invisibility and sexual agency. Before any thorough discussion of the politics of embodiment in Brazilian sexual discourses, a detour into the mind of Gilberto Freyre is necessary. This detour lays the foundation for understanding Brazil's sexual universe and the role of an erotic system of meaning that is completely predicated on heteronormative and androcentric ideologies.

National Passions and Anal Eroticism

In the December 1984 issue of Brazilian *Playboy*, the renowned and controversial Brazilian sociologist and public intellectual Gilberto Freyre wrote a twenty-six-page essay about Brazilians' adoration of the *bunda* (buttocks, butt, or ass).

The essay was titled "Bunda: Uma Paixão Nacional" ("Ass: A National Passion"; 1984). In the essay, published almost a hundred years after the end of slavery and fifty-one years after the publication of his most influential work, *Casa-Grande e Senzala*, Freyre provided historical, literary, and artistic evidence to illustrate the *bunda's* central role in the Brazilian sexual landscape. Brazilian miscegenation practices created an ideal *bunda*—female, of course—whose sway, rhythmic movement, and voluptuousness were characteristic of African women's buttocks. By mixing with indigenous and European blood, this new Brazilian creation was able to avoid the "africanoid exaggerations" that marked the protruding asses of the average African slave woman in Brazil. As such, Brazilian women's, especially the *mulatas'* (brown-skinned women), undulating *bundas* were well-made to inspire indigenous, African, and European (Portuguese) men's penchant for anal sex during colonial times. There is also a clear connection in colonial Latin America between sodomy and domination (Sigal 2003:3), and this association would seem to be another reason to explain Portuguese and white Brazilian men's predilection for anal sex. They wanted to demonstrate their dominance in relation to submissive others, whether indigenous women, African women, or even African boys and men (Freyre 1946:75, 154–55). Thus it was official: Brazil was a country of *bunda*-lovers and anal sex aficionados. In many ways, this description of anal eroticism in Brazil is the official narrative that dominates public discourses about sexuality in the country. Upon further reflection, however, it is ironic that even as women's bodies and sexual femininity are central to these discussions about anal eroticism and pleasure, women's perspectives and conceptions are invisible in conversations about sexuality. For Freyre, the clear and provocative objectification of women's bodies, especially brown-skinned women's *bundas*, leads to a sexual directionality that primarily focuses on men's capacity for pleasure, which in turn, represents the Brazilian model for sexuality. Despite Freyre's pronouncement that *bunda* passion is a national pastime, his *Playboy* essay has a single-minded focus on men's experiences as the main source for understanding sexuality in Brazil. The heteronormativity in Freyre's description of anal eroticism is implicit. It is a female *bunda* that drives Brazil's obsession, and men are the primary beneficiaries. Even though Freyre attempts to discuss women's pleasure and sexuality in his *Playboy* essay and his other works, it is quite clear that their needs are secondary to and, coincidentally, happen to complement the sexual desires of men, especially white men in Brazil.

Ideology of the Erotic

While Freyre's *bunda* manifesto provides a historical basis for understanding anal eroticism in Brazil, no more than seven years later, an American, Richard Parker, attempted to provide a more theoretical and ethnographic evidence for

understanding this cultural phenomenon. In *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions: Sexual Culture in Contemporary Brazil*, first published in 1991 with a second edition published in 2009, Parker argues that Brazilians greatly enjoy anal sex because it is a highly charged sexual act whose erotic nature rests in its transgression of societal, hygienic, and even biblical taboos involving anal penetration for sexual pleasure (2009:144–46). According to Parker, three sexual frames of reference prevail: "the hierarchy of gender," "the hierarchy or ideology of sexuality," and "the ideology of the erotic." For Parker, the hierarchy of gender encompasses Brazilian and Latin American notions about the active/passive nature of sexual interactions (2009:5–7). As for the "hierarchy of sexuality," this ideology manages Brazilian sexuality through medical and religious discourses, which focus on the reproductive value of sex and eschew or repress all other forms of sexual activities. The most important aspect of this hierarchy in Parker's framework is its emphasis on repression and prohibition. While the hierarchies of gender and sexuality are integral to Brazilians' sexual conceptualizations, the "ideology of the erotic" is the most influential of the three sexual subsystems that operate in Brazil. The Brazilian cultural norms that are expressed through promulgation of Parker's first two subsystems increase the potency of the third. For example, by emphasizing repression, Parker contends that religious and medical sexual discourses only encourage transgression and ultimately the appeal of an "ideology of the erotic." Therefore, in this sexual subsystem of reference, pleasure, desire, and *fogo* (fire) are the shapers of Brazilians' sexual experiences. Not only genitalia but all bodily surfaces become potential foci for sensual enticements. Furthermore, the transgression of societal, hygienic, and biblical boundaries—the hierarchies of gender and sexuality—only heightens the pleasure that Brazilians experience because they are "breaking the rules" (2009:117). As such, sexual boundary crossing is inextricably connected with the ideology of the erotic, which he considers as the overriding sexual framework that guides Brazilians' sexual experiences. Parker argues: "While perhaps never completely eclipsed, the hierarchical distinctions between men and women and the detailed classification of sexual normality and abnormality give way to a new understanding of sexuality—a symbolic economy which takes shape as an esthetic of excitement and desire, of the body, and its potential for pleasure" (2009:117). In Parker's conception of the Brazilian sexual universe, body parts transcend their gender-identified attributes and are used as tools of sexual gratification. The vagina is no longer dark and dangerous but warm and inviting; the penis is no longer a violent weapon but a source of pleasure and fulfillment (2009:128). Pleasure is derived within the erotic framework precisely because it is in negotiation with the other symbolic sexual subsystems: "Breaking down the separations of daily life in the fleeting moments of desire, pleasure, and passion, the erotic offers an anarchic alternative to the established order of the sexual universe"

(Parker 2009:151). In order to demonstrate the cogency of his theoretical claims about Brazilian sexuality, Parker turns to ethnographic evidence and, more specifically, the centrality of anal eroticism in Brazilians' sexual repertoire.

In the chapter "Bodies and Pleasure," Parker describes Brazilians' engagement, enjoyment, and predilection for anal sex. In agreement with Freyre, he identifies the *bunda* as a site of pleasure and exploration for Brazilians. Parker notes that anal eroticism is one of the dominant sexual motifs within Brazil's sexual linguistic repertoire (2009:144). Several of his informants discuss the *bunda*, specifically the *cu* (asshole), as a locus for pleasure precisely because of its association with filth. Roberto, a twenty-two-year-old gay university student, succinctly explicated Parker's main point about the transgressive logic of the erotic: "Anal sex is my favorite. When we're young, we learn that it is condemned by the Bible. . . . The sense of sin is very great. But we also learn that fucking an ass is very pleasurable (*gostosa*), very exciting. There is the desire mixed with a sense of prohibition" (2009:146). Another male informant also focused on the relationship between the dirtiness of the anus's function and the "dirtiness" of anal penetration (2009:134). For the men quoted in this chapter, the pleasure they received from anal sex, whether as the penetrator or the penetrated, was intrinsically connected to the naughty nature of this sexual act. This pivotal chapter and focal point of Parker's ethnography appears prima facie to bolster Freyre's ruminations about Brazilians' *bunda* fascination and desire for anal sex. Unfortunately, like Gilberto Freyre, Richard Parker is also guilty of projecting a totalizing Brazilian sexual discourse that omits the experiences of "real" women even as he assumes to speak from their perspectives. Despite the fact that he does not quote or provide any description of an individual woman's experience with anal sex, Parker contends that women, too, enjoy anal sex and for the same reasons that men do: "For many women as well, anal eroticism continues to be associated with the transgression of taboo . . . anal intercourse continues to be central to the structure and significance of erotic practice" (2009:146).[5] Upon what basis is Parker making these assertions? Where are the voices of women? Eighteen years after the first publication of *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions*, Parker responds to these critiques in the preface of the second edition: "Perhaps the most typical criticism was that women were not given enough attention in a book that claims to be about Brazilian sexual culture broadly defined. I completely agree with this criticism, and think that the analysis really focuses on a male-dominated discursive universe—though it is a male-dominated discourse that women are certainly conversant in, even if they may also elaborate their own counter-discourses" (2009:xvi). While I would agree that dominant sexual discourse in Brazil is male dominated, Parker does not adequately address the most salient of the critiques about his treatment of women: Where is his evidence to support his assertions about Brazilian women's

sexual preferences and desires? Not only is *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions* a theoretical text that focuses on Brazilian sexual discourse, but it also purports to be an *ethnographic* text: "On the basis of these various experiences, then, I have sought to examine the sometimes contradictory cultural patterns, the ideological constructs, and the value systems that work to shape and structure the sexual universe in contemporary Brazilian life" (2009:197). Undoubtedly, Parker has conducted a considerable amount of fieldwork in Brazil, and his theses about Brazilian sexuality have been valuable to scholars of Brazilian sexuality. Despite his achievements, I, along with other scholars, still question the relationship between Parker's discursive world of sexual androcentrism and women's lived experiences. The average Brazilian woman may indeed be conversant in a "cultural grammar" (2009:184, 197) of sexuality that privileges anal eroticism, but does this mean that she likes to speak this language? Based on ethnographic research by Donna Goldstein and Jessica Gregg, in addition to evidence I have found in my own research, it is evident that Brazilian women's relationship with anal eroticism is far more complex and varied than Parker asserts in his seminal work about Brazilian sexuality (Goldstein 2003:236; Gregg 2003:41). Parker may have deciphered the different symbols, histories, and situations that have influenced Brazil's sexual universe, but his employment of this knowledge has created a symbolic and experiential world that does not include women's voices or experiences.

Embodiment and the Ideology of the Erotic

A critical analysis of Richard Parker's understanding of Brazilian sexual frameworks and ideologies does not negate the salience of his emphasis on the experiential aspects of sexuality, which has led me to consider medical anthropologist Thomas Csordas's theories about embodiment. In discussing the sexual desires and practices of the women I encountered in Salvador, it is also necessary to consider the ramifications of the bodily experiences that women gravitate toward in their sexual lives. While feelings and physical states of pleasure are inevitably "embodied" experiences, these sensations are also embodied by individuals in specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. In order to understand this relationship between culture and "the body," I find myself persuaded by Thomas Csordas's phenomenological approach to embodiment. Utilizing Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *preobjective* and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*, Csordas deconstructs the ecstatic religious experiences of charismatic Catholics and the healing practices of Navajo Native Americans (Csordas 1990, 1994, 2004). Csordas begins from Merleau-Ponty's standpoint that the body is a "setting in relation to the world" (Csordas 1990:8). In his own words, Csordas states that the body "is not an *object* to be studied in relation

to culture, but is to be considered as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture" (1990:5). By collapsing a Cartesian approach to embodiment, this phenomenology eliminates the a priori divide between subject and object (1990:7), thereby releasing the body to be in continual states of constitution and reconstitution (1990:40). Alongside Csordas's employment on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, he borrows from Pierre Bourdieu's habitus in his quest to develop a methodology that articulates how "the body" becomes culturally situated and constituted. Csordas characterizes the habitus as a system that "constitutes the unconscious, collectively inculcated principle for the generation and structuring of both practices and representations," and this notion "synthesizes behavior and environment in a single term" (1994:9). As a "structuring structure" (Bourdieu 1977:72), the habitus regulates social behavior because it constantly reinforces its boundaries and bolsters its efficacy as the "unconscious" but ever-present structuring system within societies and cultures. For Csordas, however, neither the *preobjective* nor the habitus sufficiently address the entirety of the embodiment process, whether because of too much focus on "microanalysis of individual subjectivity" (Merleau-Ponty's preobjective) or because of an inadequate attention to "self-motivated change" (Bourdieu's habitus) (1990:42n21). Together, the *preobjective* and the habitus provide for a "paradigm of embodiment" that focuses on the interplay between conceptions and practice as lived/embodied experiences that are intrinsically subjective and intersubjective. Csordas's approach to embodiment is salient for a discussion about sexuality because the erotic is experienced by Brazilians through their historical, cultural, social, and subjective bodies. In contrast, Parker's ideology of the erotic arises from a discursive plane that approaches erotic embodiment from, I would suggest, a limited postmodernist perspective:[6] "Within this erotic frame of reference, however, the body is constructed neither as a foundation for the hierarchy of gender nor as a physical site for the truth of the subject, but as we have seen, as an object of desire and a source of pleasure. The cultural configurations that shape this erotic body characterize it in terms of its beauty and its sensuality, its erotic potential" (2009:149). From this perspective, the ideology of the erotic is able to "manhandle" the other sexual frames of reference in Brazil in its transformation of the penis from a phallic representation of domination into a mere tubular instrument that delivers pleasure into *cus* (assholes) and *bucetas* (pussies). To be fair, Parker does state that *sacanagem* (transgression) is integral to Brazil's ideology of the erotic, which indeed situates this ideology within a Brazilian context and not outside of this country's history (2009:150–51). As was mentioned earlier, the transgressive attractiveness of anal eroticism, for example, is directly related to the history of the relationship between the state, the church, and the biomedical establishment and their developments of hierarchies of gender and sexuality in Brazil.

Thus, in their eschewal of cultural, social, and religious mores that prohibit anal sex, Brazilians receive more bodily gratification when they partake in this taboo sexual act. I agree with Parker that transgression and taboo breaking appeared to intensify the sexual satisfaction of the men in his study. I would also stipulate that Parker's description of sexual pleasure is rooted in a theoretical framework that does not give sufficient regard for individual's, particularly women's, personal experiences.

In order to elucidate the foundation of my concerns about this historically based ideology of the erotic, I turn to Donna Goldstein's critique of Parker's theories about Brazilian sexuality in her ethnography *Laughter Out of Place*. Goldstein states that because Parker's articulation of transgression is patterned after traditional gender relations, women are subjugated to the role of "boundary-setters" in his described sexual universe in Brazil (2003:233, 247). Although she agrees that *sacanagem* (transgression) is "an important organizing concept in the realm of Brazilian sexuality" (2003:246), unlike Parker, Goldstein focuses on the *concrete* experiences and consequences of *sacanagem* for women and vulnerable boys. For example, in discussions about anal sex with women, Goldstein notes that for some women, anal sex "was fun and pleasurable. For others, it became a point of contention because men seemed to request it, whereas women usually expressed more ambivalence about it" (2003:247). The variety of responses to and experiences of anal sex among the women Goldstein interviewed highlights, again, the missing phenomenological component of Parker's argument about anal eroticism in Brazil: How do women experience anal sex? In her analysis about anal eroticism among boys, Goldstein draws attention to the embodied processes that can motivate the existence of these sexual interactions: "But these homoerotic games are usually initiated by older and stronger males who exert their power over younger and weaker boys, claiming masculine sexual identities for themselves in the process of violating and symbolically feminizing others" (2003:247). Within these sexual situations, the transgression of taboos seems to be less of an enticement than the desire to display masculine prowess and dominance. Without seriously raising the consequences of these power dynamics in the use of sexual transgression as a weapon of domination, Parker's revelations about Brazil's ideology of the erotic have more discursive value than practical or experiential value for understanding Brazilian sexuality. Discursively, Parker emphasizes the integral and central role pleasure has in any conversation about sexuality, which is valuable. Unfortunately, he analyzes Brazilian sexual universe in such a disembodied, or at least, androcentric, manner that it is unclear what the exact relationship is between sexual ideologies and Brazilians', especially women's, *lived* sexual experiences. Additionally, like Bourdieu's habitus, Parker's ideology of the erotic can be criticized as being an almost totalizing structuring system of eroticism that ignores personal agency and preferences.

Erotic Embodiment and Gender Identity

With these critiques in mind, I employ an ideology of "erotic embodiment" that acknowledges both the structuralist and subjective elements of sexuality and desire in an analysis of Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women's sexual experiences and romantic choices in Salvador. Because Brazilian social and cultural norms encompass gender roles, gender comportment, dress, and even the movement of bodies, women who fail to fulfill these expectations occupy a precarious position in Brazilian society. As noted by Cecilia McCallum, the "female gender" becomes constituted through revealing clothes, provocative dance moves, and other nonverbal expressions of sensuality and sexuality. On "the street," these are the markers of her femininity. In the home, childbirth, child rearing, homemaking, and submissiveness to male authority become the most important features that indicate her womanhood (McCallum 1999:284–87). When women do not engage in these culturally accepted forms of femininity, words like *sapatona* (dyke), *sapatão* (dyke), *camionheira* (dyke), and *bofe* (butch)[7] are used to denigrate their gender as well as sexuality because masculine women are assumed to have sex with other women. Of the thirty-eight women I formally interviewed, three women, Rita, Alice, and Roberta, emphasized their masculinity as an integral aspect of their identity; both Rita and Roberta self-identified as lesbian women and *bofes*,[8] and Alice described herself as an *entendida*. Additionally, there were two more women in my study who very likely would have been conceived as *bofe* within lesbian circles and the greater Salvador community, but neither of them appeared to identify with masculinity. Lastly, based on my own observations of their style of dress, personality, and overall comportment, five other women seemed to be "gender shifters," women who were more malleable in terms of their ability or desire to increase and decrease, consciously and unconsciously, their masculinity or femininity. In my formal interviews, I asked women the following questions about masculine women: What does it mean when people say that a woman is behaving like man? What does it mean to have a masculine attitude? In the responses given by Rita and Alice to these questions, each woman referred to herself and stated that she "felt and thought like a man." Rita was a fifty-one-year-old, dark-skinned *negra* who was unemployed and a former public transportation employee.[9]

> **RITA:** I have a woman's body, but my mind/mentality is something else. I think like a man, but I have a woman's body. . . . It's about the way you dress, the way you walk, we imitate men. . . . For me, the active one is, in my opinion, the one who is the boss, who works, who puts everything in the house. And the passive is the one who is more like, "I will give, I will give."

Alice was forty-seven years old, a self-identified *negra*, and unemployed. Over the years, she had done construction work, house painting, and other forms of manual labor.

> **ALICE:** No, because I'm a woman, my body is woman, but my mentality is not that of a woman, my mind, my thinking, my logic is all a man's.
>
> **ALICE:** No, we feel, we feel like men, but we don't need to remove anything—it's attitude, mentality.
>
> **ANDREA:** What is a masculine attitude to you?
>
> **ALICE:** I have the last word, I have the voice—it's just that, the end of it. It's not, "Oh, I'll do it tomorrow." NO! It's this: "You see this here, I want it there, leave it there." There's nothing to remove from its place. But to be a man, you have to make it happen, no.

For Rita and Alice, embodiment occurred on multiple levels as they were mentally embodied as men and physically embodied as women, reconciling themselves to a life of Cartesian mind/body dualism.[10] As men, they were independent, assertive, and self-reliant; they had a swagger, not a sway, when they walked. As women, they had breasts and vaginas, could menstruate, and could even become pregnant and give birth if they so desired. For example, in the case of Alice, she purposefully had sex with a man when she was in her twenties because she wanted a child, specifically a boy. On a physical and conceived biological level, their breasts and vaginas marked Rita and Alice as female, and they were willing to acknowledge this reality.[11] Together, their dualistic approach to sex/gender—body–female versus mind–male—was actualized in their thought and speech, which affected, informed, and established how they moved in the world.[12]

From a "queer" standpoint, it would be an imposition of North American and European notions to identify Rita's and Alice's masculinity as a representation of "female masculinity" that was independent of "male masculinity" (Halberstam 1998). Furthermore, Rita's and Alice's masculinities were not subversive in the Butlerian sense (Butler and Salih 2004), because their conception of masculinity was directly tied to a dualistic understanding of gender—*men do this, women do that*. At times, queer studies and postmodern scholarship look for subversion and parody when conceptions of authenticity or "realness" are of more importance for individuals. In her work *Gender in Real Time*, Kath Weston raises this issue about queer analyses of butch/femme identities: "In everyday life butch/femme may sometimes be associated with a playful, irreverent, anti-essentialist approach to gender, but this association has been confined to a limited number of 'players' in relatively specialized historical circumstances" (2002:68). In twentieth-first-century North American and European discourses about butch/femme identities,

femininity, and masculinity, an overreliance on performance theory can impede analysis of gender/sex constructions in different cultures and societies, and even in the United States. Inattentiveness to the "complexities and contradictions" that arise based on racial, class-stratified, historical, cultural, and environmental contexts can obscure individuals' sincerity and belief in dominant notions of gender roles and their rejection of gender performance as forms of parody or "play."[13]

Gender Identity, Race, and Class

The interplay between racial, socioeconomic, and cultural factors in the formation of masculine identities in Salvador was ever present in the life of one woman in my study, Roberta. Like Rita and Alice, Roberta was a woman who "thought like a man." Younger than Rita and Alice at forty-three years of age, the most distinctive aspects of Roberta's appearance were her skin color and hair. Her skin tone was of the darkest brown, almost black in color, and she wore her hair in a very short, slightly curly crew cut. Roberta was heavyset and carried most of her weight in her midsection and her chest. Unlike Rita and Alice who usually did not wear bras with their standard men's outfit of Bermuda shorts and tank tops, Roberta always wore a bra in public when she socialized in the neighborhood. Despite the presence of her large breasts, she too would partake in the manly tradition of rolling her tank top above her belly when it was unusually hot outside. Overall, Roberta's appearance and demeanor clearly indicated her status, as well as pride, as a *bofe* (masculine lesbian woman). When I first asked Roberta what it meant for her to be a *bofe*, she stated: "I am a man, I am a woman, I am a man . . . it is the way you dress, being in the man's role." Integral to Roberta's *bofe* identity was her style of dress, which gave her a "sense of place" in the world because style and identity were connected to her. Unlike *leides* (feminine, "girly" women), Roberta thought that because *bofes* "stood out," they had to assume a lesbian identity, thereby changing their "way of living." Another integral aspect of Roberta's *bofe* identity was her relationships with *loiras* (light-skinned or white women), especially those who were heterosexual. Because I lived in the same neighborhood as Roberta and knew some of her friends and ex-lovers, I had heard that Roberta liked to date *loiras* and was unashamed about her particular taste in women. During one interview, after Roberta stated that she was both a man and a woman, she immediately began talking about her desire for *loiras* and how she "adored them." When I asked Roberta about her preference for *loiras*, she provided a rather candid response:

> **ROBERTA:** They stand out more. And I think in this neighborhood, when I am with a woman, the men envy me. When I want a woman like that, and I go to her and change her mind, I draw more attention to myself.

ANDREA: So it is more of a triumph . . . a reward . . . [she interrupts me].

ROBERTA: That's it. Where I live, at my status, this is a lot. When I get a woman like that, I like to change her, a black *bofe* with a white *leide*, it's impressive. Around here, in this neighborhood, I like drawing attention to myself.

Because Roberta had very dark skin, she was subjected to taunts and teasing during her childhood, which left indelible marks on her psyche because dark skin was not seen as being a feature of *boa aparência* (good appearance) in Brazilian society. In fact, her distinctly "African" facial features and hair texture further marked her as not having *boa aparência*[14] because this category is used to describe someone who has facial features, hair, and skin tone that mark him or her as white or light-brown–skinned. Specifically, Roberta's "black" features are not considered good. Raised by a single mother and with no contact with her father, Roberta left high school to help her mother because Roberta had five younger five siblings. She never returned to finish her high school education, and throughout the years she had worked at a bar, as a janitor at a hospital, and in retail. When I conducted our first interview together, she had been unemployed for eight months after losing her job as a janitor. Based on Roberta's life experiences and the fact that she was a very dark-skinned, poor black woman who had a masculine carriage and was attracted to women, her attraction to *loiras* was not a coincidence. Roberta's socioeconomic status, skin tone, and female body limited her options, yet these limitations also shaped the performance of her masculinity and even bolstered her masculine status: "a black *bofe* with a white *leide* . . . that's impressive." Instead of merely drawing attention to herself because she was dark-skinned and masculine looking, Roberta dated and paraded heterosexual *loiras* around the neighborhood, thereby displaying her romantic prowess and emasculating the men—her peers—in the neighborhood. She may have been poor and black, but according to Roberta, she could "*pegar* [get or catch] a white woman";[15] Roberta's emasculation of men did not merely rest in her ability to date other women, even *loiras*. Instead, her sexual prowess was also rooted in the fact that she was a *bofe*, which signified that she was "the man" or the dominant partner in public and, as equally important in Brazilian society, the bedroom as well.

Active Sexuality and "Biological Sex"

In order to provide a theoretical framework for understanding Roberta's feat of masculinity, it is necessary to describe the prominent relationship between gender and sexuality in Brazil. Earlier in this chapter, I described Parker's three sexual systems of reference in Brazil: the hierarchies of gender and sexuality and the ideology of the erotic. To reiterate, the hierarchy of gender corresponds with

Brazilian and Latin American notions about passive and active sexual contact. This system encompasses strict gender roles because there is always the "eater" versus the "giver," the penetrator versus the penetrated, and ultimately, the masculine versus the feminine. Thus when a man penetrates a mouth, an anus, or a vagina with his penis and achieves genital orgasm, he displays his dominance in both the sexual encounter and in the overall relationship (Parker 2009:53). Therefore, when Roberta performed a form of masculinity that was associated with dominance in both sexual and nonsexual situations, Roberta signaled that she was the man in the relationship with her *loiras* in every possible scenario. By demonstrating manliness, Roberta gained a certain kind of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1984), which was remarkable considering Roberta did not meet the expectations of the ideal Brazilian woman: sensual, sexual, submissive, and yet fiery at the same. Roberta was not this type of woman. Instead, this dark-skinned and masculine-looking woman may have been poor and black, but she could "get" a white woman, illustrating both manliness and whiteness. In the racialized and gendered hierarchy of power in Brazil, white men are at the apex, representing wealth, prestige, and power. Consequently, marrying white men provides respectability for nonwhite women, who are not valued as suitable marital partners in Brazilian society (Goldstein 1999). It is not a triumph to marry a *mulata* or a black woman. Accordingly, Roberta's racial, class-stratified, and biologically sexed realities become subsumed under the weight of her performance of white *active* masculinity. A statement by Gilberto Freyre epitomizes this thinking: "A white woman to marry, a *mulata* to fuck, and a black woman to work" (2002:38). Thus, on one level, Roberta's performance of white masculinity encompasses both sexual and nonsexual displays of dominance, thereby appearing to affirm beliefs that gender as well as sexuality do not have to correspond to a "masculine = active = man" equation in Brazil's sexual universe. However, upon closer inspection, this position ignores the reality of everyday discourses about active/passive sexuality and elides the power of the penis. Owing to the dissemination of what Parker calls the hierarchy of gender within Brazilian culture and academic circles, the Brazilian sexual universe is seen as being grounded in ambiguity or "ambigu-sexuality" (Mendès-Leite 1993). For example, Cecilia McCallum, who studies race, gender, and embodiment in Salvador, reiterates this well-known idea: "In descriptions of male-female sexual intercourse in the Baixa, as elsewhere in Bahia and indeed Brazil, the woman 'gives' (*dar*), the man 'eats' (*comer*). The link between gender and form of action is not based on biological assumptions about male and female bodies. The act of penetration is what constitutes the masculinity of the penetrator, whilst the gift of a bodily orifice constitutes the femininity—or non-masculinity—of the penetrated. Thus, men who 'eat' other men are not emasculated. Gendering, in the sexual domain, may be reversed by engaging

the body in either giving or eating" (1999:285). McCallum's explanation of active/passive sexuality is noteworthy because, as I mentioned in the Introduction, non-Brazilian women scholars like herself, Donna Goldstein (2003), and Jessica Gregg (2003) have derided the lack of discussion about women's sexual desires and encounters in Brazil. Despite the value of her foray in the field of Brazilian women's sexuality, McCallum's own analysis is based within an androcentric framework. For example, McCallum's depiction of active/passive sexuality is configured in such a way that there is the possibility that a woman can penetrate a man and become the "eater" in the sexual encounter. Within this sexual framework, it appears that the disembodied act of penetration is the most influential marker of dominance. In everyday descriptions about active/passive sexuality, however, penises—not fingers, dildos, or other inanimate objects—are recognized as the penetrating agents. While I readily admit that these other phallic objects are penetrative forces that can symbolize active sexuality, dominance, and power in both consensual and nonconsensual sex acts, they are still substitutions for the *real* thing. In the active/passive sexual paradigm, there is "a directionality" to the flow of pleasure during a sexual encounter that represents the flow of power. While in recent years there has been more discussion about women's orgasms in Brazilian society (Barbosa 1996), it is generally the male/active participant's orgasm that is the focal point in the sexual encounter; in the act of consumption, it is the eater, and not the food, who seeks satisfaction. Subsequently, the question remains: When does the woman become the eater?

When considering the question about women's ability to "eat" men, Brazilian culture appears to rely on metaphorical and not literal examples. For instance, a woman is categorized as the "eater" of a man when she is the perpetrator of infidelity because she has conquered him through psychological warfare. Another case is when a woman is a clever seducer and a man financially supports her to the neglect of his primary family. Lastly, a woman can be an "eater" if she has sex with a lot of men. Notably, all these examples are based on the idea that a woman demonstrates masculine characteristics through her sexual prowess and dominance in the relationships (Goldstein 2003:236–43). Furthermore, none of the well-known or discussed examples involve a woman "eating" a man through a specific sexual act, illustrating that in everyday parlance and practice, the active sexual partner is always already a man.[16] If this were not the case, then why would a discussion about women's "active sexuality" be virtually absent in McCallum's article about the cultural restraints placed on women's sexuality? In essence, her work, as well as other texts that discuss gendered and sexualized encounters, gender role-playing, or gender performances in Brazil, posits women as always already the submissive and passive partners in sexual encounters.

Active Sexuality among Lesbian and *Entendida* Women in Salvador

Since women are always already in the position of the submissive/passive part-
ner, it is understandable that the active/passive sexual dynamic still governs the
sexual frameworks of some lesbian and *entendida* women. In the previous para-
graph, I argued that the primary goal, symbolically, for the active/masculine
sexual partner was to receive sexual satisfaction through penile penetration of a
vagina, an anus, or a mouth. In Brazilian society, it could be argued that there
are three key elements that can shape the overall sexual pleasure of an *homem*
(man): the sensations an *homem* feels through penile penetration; the sensations
an *homem* feels that are related to the knowledge that someone is his "submis-
sive"; and the sensations an *homem* feels because his sexual partner's reactions
demonstrate her/his sexual fulfillment, thereby establishing the *homem*'s sexual
might. These elements of active sexuality are porous and influence each other,
and feelings of sexual dominance enhance genital pleasure because emotions
are "embodied experiences" (Csordas 1990:37). Of course, on a personal level,
individual men might incorporate or dismiss any one of these potential aspects
of active sexuality. It would be unreasonable to assert that all or even most
Brazilian men are only concerned with achieving an orgasm or providing their
sexual partner with pleasure in order to demonstrate their own sexual prowess.
Ideologically, however, there are rigid conceptions of active and passive sexual
behavior and its ensuing physical features (orgasms), which influence all Brazil-
ians', including lesbian and *entendida* women's, sexual experiences. From an
ethnographic standpoint, the embodiment of these sexual prescriptions by les-
bian and *entendida* women occurred in intriguing combinations, revealing the
interplay between their ideas about femininity, masculinity, pleasure, and desire
and their own subjectivities. What does "active sexuality" look like in sexual
relationships between women? For twenty-seven of the thirty-eight women I
formally interviewed, the notion of active/passive sexual roles was not applicable
or appropriate to their conceptualizations of sexual relations between women.
Instead, women emphasized reciprocity or a *troca-troca* (exchange), and the per-
formance or lack of performance of any sexual activity was not based on who
was the "masculine" or "feminine" partner in the relationship. Women's sexual
activities were informed by their individual sexual preferences, which centered
on vaginal or anal sex that involved fingers, tongues, other body parts, dildos,
and vibrators. A notable minority of women (seven) seemed to subscribe to or
were greatly influenced by Brazilian sexual norms that dictated the gender role
of each partner in a sexual encounter. Three of the seven women, Rita, Alice, and
Roberta, self-identified as masculine lesbian or *entendida* women and were also
on the lowest socioeconomic strata of the participants in this study. They lived
in the same neighborhood and were friends with each other. Additionally, it was

not surprising that the other two participants who resided in the same community held similar beliefs about gender roles in sexual encounters. Beyond women in this one neighborhood, Lisete, who was discussed in Chapter 2, appeared to have been heavily influenced by her heterosexual experiences, which informed her conceptions about women's sexual activities with each other. Falana, the last of the seven women who subscribed to some form of active/passive sexuality, was the most flexible in her beliefs about gender roles in the bedroom even though she still employed masculine/ feminine language to discuss women's same-sex sexual practices.

Lisete

Unlike her friend Falana, Lisete was only comfortable when she was the "active" partner or "behaved like the man" (her words) during sexual encounters with her girlfriend. Lisete observed that "there is something inside me that is manly, it is the *macho*." When I asked Lisete what being the active partner meant for her, she stated:

> LISETE: To be the active person is to take the lead in the situation, make the decisions . . . she is the one who does things. She puts the person in the position that she wants. She is the one who caresses while the person lies there still, receiving the caress and the other person giving. I think the active is the person who gives, not the person who receives. . . . I am active in the sense that I am in a relationship, and I don't wait for the person to talk. I take the lead, I take off her clothes, take her to bed. I move more. I see it as, I move more, so I'm the active one. I like to give the direction and the person to follow it.

Her statements about active sexuality were intriguing because for the majority of her "sexual life," she had only been in relationships with men. Lisete, who at the time of the interview was thirty-four, began dating and having sex with women when she was thirty years old. One could argue that because Lisete previously led a "heterosexual lifestyle" for the vast majority of her life, her acceptance and employment of dominant sexual discourses was understandable. Not only was she socialized into a system in which a hierarchy of gender reigned, she experienced this system from a subjective standpoint through her embodiment of heterosexuality and heteronormativity. Even as a heterosexual woman, Lisete stated that she struggled with her prescribed role as the submissive partner, sexually and otherwise, in her relationships with men. Lisete wanted to lead and not follow, but this desire to lead and be the masculine partner did not represent a longing for her to be thought of as a masculine lesbian or a *bofe*. For Lisete, a sex/gender/sexuality association was unnecessary; she could wear dresses in

public and be the "man" in private. Since she associated dominance, control, and power with masculinity, there must be something inside her, she assumed, that was manly and active.

Rita

While Lisete did not associate her active sexuality with a masculinity identity, Rita's *bofe* identity did influence and shape her beliefs about her role during sexual activities. Rita's conceptions about sexual behavior and gender were unique among the women I interviewed: she was the most reluctant to receive sexual stimulation because of her beliefs about active sexuality. "I like to be the boss," she stated, "Even in bed I like to be the boss. I don't like to be bossed around. I like it like this—I do this, I do that. I repress too, if anybody touches me. I say, no, it's not like that, no, leave me be, I will do it to you. I don't know . . . I like to be active." In contrast to Lisete, Rita was mostly concerned with the physical aspects of being the active sexual partner. For Rita, embodying masculinity encompassed being the initiator and executor, and not the direct target of sexual pleasure, and she felt the most in control when she performed sexual acts on her partner. Since "giving" was an integral aspect of Lisete's active sexuality, it could be argued that her "activity" focused more on the attitudinal elements of masculinity that involved the entire process of seduction. Rita and Lisete's performances of masculinity were embodied in ways both similar and different—Rita focused on the more physical aspects of masculinity, while Lisete emphasized the mental and emotional. In one sense, both their active sexual performances represented a passive form of sexuality because the focus was not on Lisete and Rita as the masculine actors but on their feminine partners. For Lisete and Rita, the display of their masculinity was represented not through their own genital stimulation but instead through their prowess as the creators of their partners' experiences of pleasure. While both women stated that they did receive sexual pleasure and had orgasms during sexual encounters, their primary source of pleasure was through their role as the "eater" or the "consumer" of their sexual partner.[17] Their interpretation of sexual "eating" appeared to be a paradigmatic shift from the common (i.e., heteronormative) understanding of active sexuality because their dominance was gained through the gratification of their lovers and not through their own sexual satisfaction. In a heteronormative or even "homme-normative" scenario, a man would tell his passive partner to come to bed, take off his or her clothes and lie down, and "receive" the man's penis in his or her mouth, vagina, or anus, which establishes the passive lover's position as the receptacle for the man's orgasmic desires. Conversely, in a sexual scenario that involved Lisete and Rita, the same demonstration of emotional or mental dominance would be performed up until the moment of the physical encounter. At this moment, the directionality and evidence of sexual dominance was not

demonstrated through penile penetration and ejaculation. Instead, Lisete and Rita used their entire bodies as phallic instruments, representing their ability to control their partners' orgasm and their overall sexual might. And since a demonstration of sexual prowess was evident in a partner's total sexual gratification (orgasm), Lisete and Rita had met one recent addition to the definition of active sexuality within Brazil because of their prioritization of their submissive/passive partner's orgasmic needs. Other integral aspects of active sexuality, however, would always remain unfulfilled because they lacked penises. Based on this sexual scenario, one essential question must be asked: Where is their own bodies' manifestation of sexual dominance? Hands, tongues, or thighs cannot produce orgasmic evidence of the active partner's sexual satisfaction. Essentially, these body parts were in service to the sexual needs of the inert passive partner, not vice versa; thus, this type of active sexuality could be associated with femininity. As a result, the so-called passive sexual position of the active women's partners could be associated with masculinity. On the other hand, focusing one's analysis on the presence or absence of a genital orgasm ignores the plethora of ways in which women and men experience pleasure during sexual encounters. Based on this analytical framework, Lisete's and Rita's female phallic embodiment could be considered as potent and active as penile penetration. Furthermore, their active sexuality involved more than penetration but included setting the scene and initiating the sexual encounter. "Activeness" was simultaneously produced and reproduced throughout their bodies and actions, illustrating that sexual power did not dwell within one body part. Instead, they were the active sexual partner because they approached sexual encounters from a position of dominance. For Lisete and Rita, active sexuality was not about the materiality of a sexual encounter (i.e., the specific sexual acts practiced) but rather about an individual's mentality and overall approach to a sexual experience. After all, there is no one way to have *la petite mort*.

Lisete and Rita

This argument about the importance of the mental and not the physical aspects of active sexuality would be convincing from a postmodern or even queer standpoint,[18] but within Brazil's cultural universe, this argument loses its validity. An examination of Lisete's and Rita's sexual likes and dislikes reveals the centrality of the bodily sensations in the performance of active sexuality. In Lisete's case, an inverse relationship developed between her passive role in relationships with men and her affection for penetration during sexual encounters. Despite their focus on being the active sexual partner, Lisete and Rita were also open to receiving sexual pleasure from the female lover, specifically oral sex and even engaging in foreplay. Foreplay was a particularly pleasurable activity for Lisete, who thought that her male lovers were too focused on

vaginal penetration and orgasms; she believed that they could not know or touch a woman's body in the same way that another woman could. Despite her critiques of her male sexual partners, she still enjoyed heterosexual sex to some extent: "I liked it, but it wasn't something satisfying. I always wanted something more. With a woman, I'm more satisfied, I don't want more. I'm satisfied, complete, it's different. Maybe it's this: I really feel complete." Before engaging in sexual relationships with women, Lisete was aware of her level of dissatisfaction when she engaged in sexual activities with men. Earlier in this section, I mentioned that Lisete dated a lot of men in her twenties, which could have been a product of her displeasure with prescribed gender roles in Brazilian society. Yet based on her same-sex sexual desiring, it would appear that Lisete was ill-suited for heterosexual, but not heteronormative, living. She stated that upon having sex with women, she embraced her active sexuality and felt complete. An important aspect of her feelings of completion, I would suggest, was her exclusion of sexual penetration:

> LISETE: Because in a relationship, I don't like . . . In the case of experiences with women, if I am dating someone and the person sticks something up my vagina, I wouldn't be turned on anymore—that would be it. I don't want it. I don't know what it is about it, you know. It's a turn off. . . . Maybe I'm too sensitive there and don't know it. But you know what it is, I don't like penetration . . . it's that. But if she caresses me with her fingers, not penetrating, I like that. For me it's excellent. I just don't want her to penetrate me.

These expressions of inclusion and exclusion of certain sexual acts illuminated Lisete's mindset. When she dated men, she was open to vaginal penetration and seemingly received pleasure from these experiences. The pleasure she received was perhaps unfulfilling, but she received pleasure during sexual intercourse with men nonetheless. Once her sexual encounters with men ended, it is notable that she no longer received pleasure from penetration. One reason her lack of pleasure from penetration arose may be related to her ability to occupy the role of active sexual partner. Heterosexual sex and the overall apparatus of heterosexuality provided Lisete with limited opportunities to experience sexual pleasure, and her acceptance became embodied in her bodily response to sexual penetration. Now that she was able to occupy the dominant role in her romantic and sexual relationships, her embodiment of active sexuality had closed that potential avenue of bodily pleasure. This closure also led to an expansion of her overall capacity to feel sexual contentment because her masculine/active embodiment occurred in the midst of her embodiment of femininity as well.

Gender Identity and Penetration

An analysis of Lisete's aversion to sexual penetration evinces the reasons why a woman like Rita, a *bofe*, would have an extreme dislike for this particular sex act. When Rita and I began discussing her sexual preferences, she immediately stated that she wanted to be the one "in command," which meant for her that she would be the one actively providing pleasure for her partner. She repeatedly stated that she did not want to be touched during a sexual encounter. Her perspective about receiving pleasure was not uncommon among *bofe* women in Salvador, according to both Rita and Roberta. In fact, Roberta mentioned Rita in my interview with her as an example of a *bofe* who did not want to be touched during sex, which was something that she "wouldn't stand for." However, through further questioning, Rita revealed that she did indeed accept the touch of her lover, but only in certain ways:

> RITA: No, I want to give, but I don't want it [back]. I want to do everything. No, no, it's because I feel pleasure sometimes. . . . there are moments when sometimes in bed . . . how do I say it? I feel an orgasm three, four times that way, but it's from my motion. Me and the person in bed, there are times when we're in bed having sex. Sometimes during sex, just kissing, I feel two, three, four times that orgasm, you know it. But there are times when she wanted to touch on me on certain parts of my body and I didn't let her. In my mind, she was wanting . . . how do I say? In my mind, she wanted to play the role that I was playing on her, and I wouldn't accept that.

Rita's statements about her sexual behavior provided a nuanced interpretation of masculine sexuality. Though Rita stated that "she liked to do everything," her *bofe* identity did allow for some reciprocity in sexual encounters. One way Rita felt an orgasm was when she and her partner kissed and caressed each other. Even though her partner was obviously involved in these activities, Rita stated that it was she and not her partner who was the originator of her orgasm. Considering that Rita conceived herself as the masculine sexual partner during a sexual encounter, it was somewhat ironic that foreplay, and not sexual intercourse, was one of her favorite ways to achieve an orgasm. For Rita, there seemed to be a "neutral" aspect to foreplay—kissing—that enabled her to feel pleasure without forsaking her masculinity. While foreplay was neutral activity, Rita did not want her partner to "switch roles" with her during a sexual encounter, and so she would only let her partner caress particular parts of her body. Switching roles specifically involved vaginal penetration with fingers. Whenever Rita stated that she did not want to be "touched," she was referring to this particular sex act. Rita's aversion to digital penetration appeared to be directly connected to her *bofe* identity: women are penetrated, men are not.

Alice

Like Lisete and Rita, Alice also had a particular dislike for sexual penetration even though she was more flexible than they were in her beliefs about gender roles in sexual encounters. Alice believed that there was no difference between giving and receiving sexual pleasure, and she had never heard of active/passive sexuality. After I explained the notion of active/passive sexuality to Alice, she responded, "I only do 'receiving and giving it,' you see. It has that difference. I think there is no difference, no." Alice's statement, among other comments, indicated that her construction of female same-sex sexuality did not rest on an active/passive paradigm that equated dominance with sexual performance. In recent years with her on-again/off-again girlfriend, Alice no longer performed sexual acts on her because her girlfriend was also in sexual relationships with men, for both money and pleasure. Alice stated that she was "suspicious" of her girlfriend and was afraid that she would acquire a sexually transmitted disease from her girlfriend. From this perspective, it would appear that Alice's sexual behavior was not connected to her gender identity, bolstering Richard Parker's argument about the supremacy, or at least dominance, of an "ideology of the erotic" in Brazilian society. However, like Rita, Alice was adamant about her "hatred" of vaginal or anal penetration and associated these sexual acts with femininity and "feminine" women.

> **ALICE:** Goodness! I like to do it. I don't like anyone to do it to me. No, no way . . . there are certain things that I don't like nobody to do to me.
> **ANDREA:** Which things?
> **ALICE:** That business of penetrating into me.
> **ANDREA:** With fingers?
> **ALICE:** No, I don't like it . . . Me, in bed, I'm the man. In bed, I'm not the woman. I don't feel like a woman in bed. I feel like a man in bed. To the point where, like I said to you, I don't like a woman to penetrate into me. That business of a woman fingering me, I hate it.

Even though Alice had not heard of the notion of active/passive sexuality, her sexual preferences illustrated the pervasiveness of this sexual ideology in Brazilian society. As a woman, Alice enjoyed certain sexual pleasures that her female body gave her. As a man, Alice excluded sexual activities that involved her female body being penetrated with fingers. One could argue that Alice's and Rita's conceptions about penetration invalidate the argument I made earlier in this section about the intrinsic connection between penile penetration and active sexuality in Brazilian sexual discourses. If penetration, and not a penis, is the deciding factor in the hierarchy of gender, is it possible that women can be authentic active sexual partners? The persuasiveness of this argument, however,

is undermined when the aversion of Alice and Rita, as well as Lisete, to penetrating fingers is brought to the fore. Their aversion, specifically relates to the overall status and supremacy that the penis has in Brazil's sexual universe.

Cunnilingus and Female Embodiment

In order to understand the relationship between penetration and masculinity, it is necessary to discuss the seemingly interstitial space that oral sex occupies in Alice's and Rita's construction of sexuality. As previously mentioned, Alice and Rita disliked having their vaginas or anuses digitally penetrated, and they were not alone as other women echoed their sentiments, and these women neither believed in active/passive sexuality nor were they masculine in appearance and demeanor. Second, virtually every woman, including Rita and Alice, mentioned their enjoyment of receiving oral sex. Even those women who preferred to perform oral sex on their partners felt pleasure when this sexual act was performed on them. Considering these findings, I was surprised by Rita's acceptance of oral sex because she was the most reluctant to receive sexual gratification directly from her partner. When I asked Rita and Alice what the difference was between oral sex and digital penetration (i.e., a tongue versus a finger), they stated:

> **RITA:** There's a big difference. The finger is more, how do you say, erect. Goodness, I have no clue. And the tongue is something more soft, yeah, more soft. That [finger], I would be like, that's a no go.
> **ANDREA:** So what's the difference between a tongue and fingers?
> **ALICE:** That's [tongue] something different. It's more pleasant. That is something more relaxed, more delicate, something suave. Seriously, you're crazy! That business of sticking a finger in me . . . [*holds up a finger with an expression of incredulity*]

Rita's and Alice's differentiation between oral sex and digital penetration was illuminating for several reasons. First, whether verbally or nonverbally (holding up a finger), each woman immediately associated fingers with erect objects—namely, erect penises. While this association in and of itself is unremarkable, it is significant in this case because of their sexual preferences and histories. Rita considered herself a virgin because she had never been vaginally penetrated by either a man or woman or a penis or finger. In fact, virginity—not having been penetrated—was so sacred to Rita that she stated it would be a "sin" for her to "take" the virginity of another woman. Yet for Rita, oral sex was in another category of "touching," a fact that enabled her to receive sexual pleasure from her partner and remain a virgin. For Alice, her dislike of penetration appeared to be related to her masculine identity, which became embodied in the physical

displeasure she felt when a partner attempted to penetrate her. I have specifically used the word "penetration" to describe this sexual act because it was the word used by Rita, Alice, and almost all the other women in my study when they discussed vaginal or anal sex that involved fingers or sex toys. Whenever any woman mentioned oral sex, however, no one used the word "penetration" to discuss this sex act even though a degree of vaginal entering could be associated with this activity. In particular, Rita's and Alice's understanding of oral sex illustrated multiple ways that they experienced their bodies as women and as women who identified with masculinity. Rita and Alice both stated that they did not want to be men and were satisfied with their female bodies, and their enjoyment of oral sex affirms the likelihood of their claims. Alongside Rita's satisfaction with her female body, she stated that she did not want to have breasts because she wanted to take her shirt off like men. I interpreted this statement as a sign of her dissatisfaction with social norms about women and nudity rather than a real dislike for her own breasts. Beyond their satisfaction—to varying degrees—with their female bodies, Rita's and Alice's strong identification with masculinity specifically affected their sexual experiences because they refused to be digitally penetrated by their sexual partner. On the other hand, it could be construed that they were still in the active sexual role like men who received oral sex from their submissive partners.

Bodily Pleasures and Erotic Embodiment

Their acceptance of this potential form of bodily pleasure represents an important distinction between Parker's "ideology of the erotic" and my notion of "erotic embodiment." Behind closed doors and in the confines of their bedrooms, the established sexual order of a hierarchy of gender still dominated Rita's and Alice's conceptions about sexual contact. The social and cultural ramifications of penetration held sway in their minds *and* bodies, impeding their ability to feel pleasure from certain sexual acts. Their masculinity was embodied—physically, mentally, and emotionally—in ways that clearly associated fingers with penises. However, their masculinity was also embodied in such a way that accepted the realities of their cis-gendered female bodies, which included the tongue. In addition, the words Rita and Alice often used to describe the tongue—soft and delicate—related to how many women construed the differences between women and men in sexual and nonsexual contexts: men were *grosso* (rough or crude) in their touch and attitude, and women innately possessed *carinho* (affection). For many of the women I encountered in Salvador, including Rita and Alice, there was a certain level of "care" they associated with a woman's touch. The "softer" (Rita and Alice) and more "delicate" (Alice) tongue embodied a femininity that was not associated with submissiveness, weakness,

and inferiority. While fingers were always already phallic symbols for Rita and Alice, tongues affirmed their womanhood, gave them pleasure, and supported their masculine identities. From an experiential standpoint, their seemingly visceral displeasure for digital penetration was contradicted by their enjoyment of "lingual penetration." When I asked Alice whether she felt pleasure during oral sex, she simply stated: "Oh girl, is there anyone who doesn't just melt [from it]?"

In this section, I have described the experiences of Lisete, Rita, and Alice, and their strongly held beliefs surrounding the relationships between gender roles, gender identity, and sexual behavior. Their belief in active/passive sexuality and masculine/feminine sexual positions greatly informed their sexual practices, shaping their permissible zones of erotic touch. For example, because their sexual philosophies were rooted in a hierarchy of gender, their ability to experience pleasure through penetration was limited and effectively suppressed. Yet unlike the aforementioned women, a sexual encounter seemed to be a liminal space for Roberta—her *bofe* identity did not fully control her willingness to participate in particular sex acts. As I stated earlier in the chapter, Roberta's behavior as a *bofe* was closely connected with her experiences as a poor, dark-skinned black woman. Informed by her life experiences and identities, Roberta's "conquest" of white women was an affront to the racial, gendered, and class-stratified power structures of Brazilian society. Despite Roberta's acceptance of these power structures, she was more open to sexual penetration than Lisete (a nonmasculine lesbian woman) and Rita and Alice (*bofe* and *entendida* masculine women). When I asked Roberta if she allowed digital penetration, at first she said she did not allow it, but then she immediately amended her statement. She noted that she had allowed 5 or 10 or maybe 20 percent (she gave quite a range of percentages) of her girlfriends to penetrate her vaginally and, on even rarer occasions, anally. The major factor involved in Roberta's decision was the care and affection her girlfriends would give her. Additionally, Roberta's openness to digital penetration seemed to be partially related to her overall attitude toward sexual encounters: "During sex, anything goes. In the moment, when it feels good, you let it happen." For Roberta, the *tesão* (sexual heat, desire, and lust) (Parker 2009:121–23) that was experienced during sex provided a potential outlet for a range of sexual activities. Roberta's permissive attitude about sexuality illustrated, in my assessment, the influence of the cultural ideology of Brazilian emotionality in the construction of her individual erotic embodiment more than Richard Parker's ideology of the erotic. As I noted in the Introduction, sensuality, immediacy, and vivacity are influential ideals that are upheld in Brazilian society, alongside gender norms that place restrictions on women's sexual behavior. Roberta's ability to receive pleasure from passive/feminine sexual activities was not necessarily an example of transgression, or *sacanagem*. Instead, Roberta's willingness demonstrated that with the right kind

of encouragement, she could transcend gendered discourses and allow her body to accept not passivity but rather all the pleasurable potentialities that come with her female body.

Sexual Fantasies and Gendered Pleasures

Transcendence and transgression are rivaling sexual ideologies that influence women's personal choices in the bedroom, and almost all the women I interviewed adhered to one of these ideologies. However, one woman, Falana, did not choose a side; instead, she created a space for sexual play and fantasy that embraced dominant gender and sexual discourses through subversion and agency. Falana was one of the most loquacious women I encountered in Salvador, and we socialized together even after I had conducted two interviews with her. I considered her a friend and visited her home in one of the *popular* (working class/poor) neighborhoods of Salvador during my time in Brazil in 2008 and 2009. She lived above her mother in a house that she had constructed but could not finish because of her financial situation. Similar to her friend Lisete, Falana was also underemployed and usually held several part-time jobs even though that she had graduated from college and had a master's degree in psychology. Throughout her professional life, Falana held part-time jobs as a child psychologist, a nonprofit employee, and a government worker in the area of social services. Additionally, an important aspect of Falana's personality was her analytical nature. In fact, Falana had seen psychoanalysts, not psychologists, throughout her adulthood and was greatly influenced by the work of Freud. Despite accomplishing these educational and professional achievements by her late twenties, Falana herself was at a disadvantage in Salvador because of her appearance—she was a dark-skinned black woman who wore her hair in braids. Falana was aware of the effects of racism in Brazilian society and had worked for a black activist organization. Although she was involved in black activism, Falana was not involved in the lesbian movement in Salvador, and she clearly separated her personal and professional lives. This separation was most evident in the fact that Falana was married to a white woman, Diana. They did not live together, per Falana's preference, but Falana considered herself a married woman—a married woman who also had sexual relationships with other women. Her wife, Diana, was unaware of her romantic liaisons, and Falana was unapologetic about her extrarelational sexual activities because she demonstrated (in her estimate) great care, affection, and love for Diana. I have provided this brief snapshot of Falana in order to establish a basis for understanding her conceptions of sexuality, gender roles, and pleasure. Falana's adherence to or employment of active/passive sexuality would seem to be incongruent with her educational background, her involvement in activism, and her overall

personality. In general, a woman's socioeconomic and educational statuses were directly related to her acceptance of active/passive sexuality and gender roles in a lesbian relationship. While the performance of gender roles in and of itself did not indicate a belief in the inherency of masculine/feminine traits,[19] for the working-class and poor women I encountered in Salvador, there was a strong correlation between gender appearance/demeanor, sexual roles, and power dynamics within a relationship. Conversely, Falana's friend Lisete appeared to be a strong believer in active/passive sexuality and gendered relationship roles, which would appear to be incongruent with her educational background and her analytical nature (her words). One explanation for Lisete's adherence to dominant sexual and gender discourses could be related to her years of living as a heterosexual woman. In her specific case—and not for every woman who lived a heterosexual lifestyle—notions about heteronormativity without heterosexuality still appealed to her. Nevertheless, Lisete's ideas were unique among the educated women I interviewed, and she was far more rigid in her performance of active/passive sexuality than Falana.

In many ways, despite their friendship, similar educational backgrounds, and shared interests, Falana and Lisete had very disparate sexual outlooks—Lisete was a "heteronormative" female homosexual, and Falana was what a gender theorist might call "queer."

> **FALANA:** In the moment that I am touching someone, and they are totally passive, totally feminine, and enjoying my touch, for me this is super marvelous . . . I receive greater pleasure in giving, but the mode of giving orgasm is masculine . . . Orgasm is the act of everything, of consuming the other. Total pleasure is greater than a regular orgasm . . . And sometimes when I am with a woman who is really active and likes to touch and consume, I like this, being passive, knowing that someone desires me a lot . . . It is very cool. For me, there does not exist a definition. I like both ways, both moments.

Falana's employment of the language of active/passive sexuality did not signify an underlying association of sexual/gender roles with her identity as a woman, be it as a strong or weak woman. Her differentiation between the roles of desirer and desired and the one consuming and the consumed were based on the specific pleasures she experienced in relation to each position. In particular, Falana was fond of a sexual position that enabled her to be both the dominant sexual partner *and* the principal recipient of sexual pleasure: *roçando a bunda*—rubbing herself against another woman's behind. Earlier in the chapter, I noted the popularity of *roçar*—the sexual act involving genital-to-genital contact or genital-to-body part contact. Falana stated that the genital-to-buttocks form of *roçar* was especially appealing because she was able to inhabit the "masculine"

role or movement of "taking a woman from behind." This sexual preference was popular among active women because they "love to orgasm on the *bunda* of the other woman," according to Falana. *Roçando a bunda* enabled Falana to fulfill her fantasy of being the "man" in the sexual relationship. A major difference between Falana's performance of sexual masculinity and, for instance, Rita's and Alice's, was that her performance was a reality onto itself—her own gender identity and overall subjectivity were not necessarily shaped through this one sexual act.[20] This sexual act was an "embodied technique" of masculinity that provided the illusion of being both the penetrative sexual partner and the primary beneficiary of this penetration. Instead of performing masculinity through the employment of fingers, dildos, or vibrators, women in effect used their vaginas as their penile *and* phallic instruments of pleasure.[21] Even though Falana understood—and enjoyed—the masculine potential in *roçando a bunda*, she was open to, and at times preferred, the role of the passive or feminine sexual partner. Since this chapter has mainly focused on the active sexual partner's experiences, Falana's thoughts about the role of the passive sexual partner are particularly significant because they elucidate how dominant/submissive relationships can be exchanges of pleasure without an exchange in sexual action. In one of Falana's aforementioned statements, she described the pleasure she received when she was the sexual partner being "eaten." Unfortunately for Falana, her wife only wanted to be the passive, "extremely passive," partner during sexual encounters. Diana's reluctance may be one reason, among many, that led Falana to seek sexual pleasure from other women because she wanted to cede control to someone else in the sexual encounter. Alongside her love of active sexual behavior, engaging in passive sexual behavior was not a dissatisfying experience for Falana because embodying the role of "pillow queen" had its own pleasures.

Activeness in Pillow Queendom

In Laura Harris's "Confessions of a Pillow Queen: Sexual Receptivity and Queer Femininities," she grapples with the stereotypes and pejorative connotations encompassing "pillow queendom" (2008). She observes that this performance of lesbian sexuality has been denigrated as a display of laziness and selfishness: "The spectacle of an idle female (feminine) bottom, receiving pleasure, demanding pleasure, luxuriating in pleasure but unbelievably, outrageously refusing to 'reciprocate' tells all we need to know about the feminist and lesbian repudiations of the category" (2008:271). She continues, "The Pillow Queen cannot be cast as a model of lesbian sexual empowerment in this contemporary moment, because by this historical moment lesbian sex is already largely pre-defined as mutual and reciprocal. Also of course, because sexual passivity has already been defined in popular culture as a sign of feminine acquiescence to patriarchal

domination" (2008:273). Harris's critique echoes the admonishment of scholars who bemoan the exclusion of sexual passivity and receptivity as "acceptable" sexual practices (Vance 1992).[22] On a theoretical level, one could argue that this lesbian and feminist rhetoric greatly influenced *some* women's sexual preferences and behavior in Salvador. It was not coincidental that educated, socioeconomically advantaged, and/or activist-minded women dismissed the active/passive sexual paradigm. In contrast, a seemingly integral aspect to the pleasure that Falana received from active/passive sexual activities was her ability to embrace as well as subvert gender roles at her leisure. Her sexual behavior and attitude was purposely embodied through gender discourses. Falana's sexual "acceptance" of gender was as valuable as her sexual transgression of gender.

Married Life, Sexuality, and Power

Beyond her sexual preferences and fantasies, Falana displayed, from a Brazilian cultural perspective, both dominant/masculine and submissive/feminine behavior, illustrating the intertwining and cocreating relationships among gender norms, agency, and erotic embodiment. Falana's experiences, while uniquely her own, elucidated the difficulty of analyzing a woman's sexual behavior or conceptions without considering other aspects of her life. When Falana and I would converse at her house over cake or at a bar over a beer, we often talked about her complicated romantic life. One complication in her life arose from her conflicting personal and professional choices: Falana worked in the black activist movement and was married to white woman. In general, the black activist movement in Salvador has had a problematic relationship with women who self-identify as lesbian, *entendida*, or have romantic relationships with other women. The pressure on lesbian women to be discreet within the black activist movement in Salvador was discussed in numerous conversations that I had with black feminist and/or lesbian activists of different age ranges. Women within the black activist movement have often downplayed or been completely silent about their romantic relationships with other women. Even though a larger number of black women activists were more open about their lesbian relationships, there was still a level of discretion evident in their actions.[23] It was understandable, therefore, that Falana did not "assume" a lesbian identity or discuss her interracial relationship with her black activist friends and colleagues in Salvador. Another complication in Falana's romantic life involved her power struggle with Diana. Diana was a masculine lesbian who liked to be passive in the bedroom and active outside the bedroom.[24] I knew that Falana and Diana had an inverted active/passive relationship because she discussed her marriage and sex life with me during our first interview. Months later, during one particular visit to Falana's house, I observed that she seemed pensive and even tormented. Falana was unhappy in her marriage, and her unhappiness

was related to the complex power dynamics in her relationship. Diana was a white, middle-class lesbian who lived in a comfortable and safe neighborhood in Salvador. Aware of Falana's financial problems, Diana wanted to help by providing Falana with the money to finish building her home, but Falana was very reluctant to accept Diana's help. After continual offers of financial support, Falana eventually allowed Diana to pay for the construction of a window, a concession that seemed to pain her. Wanting to build her house by herself and with her own money, she felt pitied when Diana offered to pay for construction supplies and other items. Falana was admittedly prideful as well as afraid that Diana would think that she was only in the relationship because of Diana's wealth. While Falana's pride precluded her from accepting Diana's money, she somehow found herself in the position of "submissive" wife to Diana. Falana noted that when Diana was at her own home she had her domestic servant do everything for her, and when she was at Falana's house, Diana expected the same level of service from her: she wanted her to turn off the television, bring her water at night, bring her food, and take away her food, among other services. When Falana objected to performing these tasks, Diana tried and succeeded in inducing feelings of guilt in Falana. Even though Falana noted that Diana reciprocated in the care, attention, and concern that she demonstrated toward her, Diana's recompense was not enough for her. Falana was especially concerned about Diana's treatment of her because she observed that no one else in her life treated her in such a manner—she would not allow it. A more incredulous situation for Falana was the common assumption that Diana was the masculine partner in the relationship because of Diana's short hair and masculine clothes. Falana noted ironically that in the bedroom, she was the one who did "all the work." Since Falana enjoyed the active sexual position, Diana's preference for passivity was not as much the issue as the fact that Diana *always* wanted to be "extremely passive" during sexual encounters. Diana's passivity was problematic because Falana wanted a more reciprocal relationship. In addition, Diana did not give oral sex to Falana, which was a "complication" for Falana because she "adored oral sex." Upon hearing Falana's complaints, sexual and nonsexual, about her relationship with Diana, I provided her with my observation: Diana's sexual passivity was another demand for Falana to do everything for her, which was essentially a form of "activeness" for Diana. Falana pondered my words seriously, and I cannot say I was surprised when a few months later, Falana told me that she and Diana had separated.

Contextualizing Erotic Embodiment

This snapshot of Falana's marriage with Diana illustrates the perils of categorizing an individual woman's role, responsibility, and power status in a relationship based merely on gender appearances and sexual preferences. Despite the cogency

of Laura Harris's defense of pillow queens, in this specific case, I would argue that Diana's preference for sexual passivity was related to her behavior and conceptions about power outside of sexual situations. Falana also gained from her relationship with Diana because she enjoyed her role as the active sexual partner even as she wanted to occupy, upon occasion, the role of the passive. Each woman benefited, to varying degrees, from this inverted gender dynamic, elucidating the cumbersome expectations and illusions that are related to dominant gender norms. In addition, one cannot ignore the fact that Falana, a black feminine woman without financial means, struggled against her submissive status in a marital relationship with a white masculine lesbian with financial stability. One also cannot ignore, however, the fact that Falana was a woman who was not without resources or analytical insight. She was conscious of the macroracial and class dynamics that shaped Diana's and her experiences with each other. Another fact of note is Falana's regular engagement in sexual activities with other women, which would be construed in Brazilian society as active/masculine behavior. Furthermore, despite Falana's own extramarital sexual behavior, Falana was quite adamant that if Diana ever had sex with another woman, she would leave her. When I asked her how she could have this stance, her reply echoed the sentiments of many Brazilian men—such behavior would just be unacceptable. The complexity of Falana's situation necessitates a careful analysis of the relationship between Falana's subjectivity and the various socioeconomic, cultural, and political forces present in Brazilian society. A simplistic interpretation of Falana as the "female slave" in the service of her "white master" would erase Falana's agency, eliding her capacity to be an individual with choices that are not bound with feelings of inferiority or envy. Roberta, for example, was a dark-skinned black masculine woman who admittedly, and proudly, regarded her white and light-skinned feminine girlfriends as trophies to be displayed in her neighborhood. Despite her stated preferences, she had been in a seven-year-long relationship—her longest—with a *morena*, and she was the least focused on active/passive sexual politics of the masculine lesbian and *entendida* women in my study. As Carol Vance noted, there is a tension feminist theorists must acknowledge between overgeneralizing about individual women's sexual and romantic subjectivity and overgeneralizing about the influence of societal forces on women's sexual choices or nonchoices (1992:17–18). Vance's statement leads me back to Thomas Csordas's notion of embodiment as the bridge between Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Pierre Bourdieu's habitus. Neither focusing solely on Falana's agency, Brazilian socialization, nor structuring practices would adequately explain the relationship between embodiment and sexual pleasure for Falana. Instead, a focus on "erotic embodiment" strives to capture the subjective and intersubjective exchange between Falana's bodily experiences of pleasure, love, and affection and cultural norms about race, desirability, and gender.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have focused on the sexual likes, dislikes, activities, and conceptions of the lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador. I have described these women's sexual behavior not to be prurient or provide salacious details about female same-sex sexuality but to elucidate the ways in which sexuality is an *embodied* practice. Furthermore, the invisibility of the sexual practice of *roçar*, or tribadism, in discussions about Brazil's sexual universe is significant not simply because many lesbian and *entendida* women enjoy it. The concept of *roçar* and the different meanings related to this practice reveal the disruptions to and continuations of Brazilian sexual discourses within their worldviews. Thus one of the reasons that this sexual act is so popular is because it is inherently subversive. When *roçar* involves genital-to-genital contact between two women, they symbolically as well as physically reject the "need" for masculine power as penile penetration. On the other hand, when a woman like Falana is *roçando a bunda*, she is also participating in the Brazilian tradition of anal eroticism as the active, and not passive, sexual partner. In either scenario, women's embodiment of femininity or masculinity has reverberations beyond the bedroom. Sexual activities, preferences, decisions, and even positions do not develop in a vacuum, outside the confines of history. Sexual pleasure encompasses contextual and subjective specificities that at times confound and conflict with the established sexual norms of a society.

CHAPTER 4

Violence, Passion, and Power
A Love Story

On January 26, 2008, I took a taxi from the airport with my friend Rui, who had met me there. I had asked him to look into housing for me, and while we were riding in the cab that day, he told me that I would be living with Rita and Zita, two women I had met and interviewed almost seven years earlier in Salvador. After my interview with them in 2001, I wrote in my field notes:

> I interviewed two women who live in Lagoa Grande today. They are a couple and have been living together for about eight months, Zita and Rita. There is about a twenty-year age gap between them, and they appear to have a butch/femme dynamic to their relationship. A friend who introduced me to them described Rita as the *marido* (husband). Rita works as a coin collector on the buses in Salvador and is far more boisterous and loud than Zita, who is not working right now. Watching their interaction, Zita getting Rita a glass of water after she came home from work and other observations, I could perceive this butch/femme dynamic. Even though Zita was quieter, perhaps more private than Rita, she was opinionated and disagreed with some of Rita's opinions about sexism and racism in Brazil. (field note, March 22, 2001)

Seven years later, even though Rita and Zita were no longer a couple, they were still living together. Zita, now twenty-eight, was the same short and sinewy woman I had remembered. She had dark skin and black gelled hair that fell just below her shoulders. Years later, she was not as quiet as I had described her in my field notes, but she still had an intense and sober demeanor about her. The years were more apparent on the stockier Rita now that she was fifty years old; her short, curly hair in a crew-cut style was more gray than black. Rita, who

was much more garrulous and friendly than Zita in 2001, now had sadness in her eyes. As I described in the previous chapter, Rita was a self-described *bofe* whose typical daily uniform was now Bermuda shorts and sleeveless men's tank tops ever since she was dismissed from her job as a bus coin collector. Considering Rita's unemployment and our past history together, Rui thought that my living with Rita and Zita would prove to be mutually beneficial. At the time, Rita periodically received some financial assistance from her mother, and Zita had recently found a low-paying job as an assistant at a neighborhood school. Despite this, they still struggled to pay their rent and buy other necessities. Each month was a struggle, and they scrambled to earn money from *bicos* (side jobs, temporary gigs, and cash-only employment opportunities). Rita and Zita often looked to family members and friends for short-term loans who often had their own financial difficulties. Thus my monthly payments for room and board would obviously be advantageous for them, and I would benefit from this arrangement by living with lesbian women and interacting with their network of friends and associates. I was excited by the prospect of living with Zita and Rita because I thought that my fieldwork experience would be more enriched and my acclimation to life in Salvador easier since I would not be living with strangers. I also thought that my previous encounter with Rita and Zita would help to facilitate the rapport that all ethnographers so desire to have in the field.

For anthropologists, unlike scholars in many other disciplines, our sensory perceptions, observations, experiences, and even our bodies become loci for information acquisition. Merely by "being there," we have already begun to acquire knowledge that is borne from specific experiences with individuals (Daniel 1996:197–98). While we, ethnographers, are one component of this dialectical relationship, the people we encounter are indeed cocreators of our experiences as well. I began the chapter by introducing Rita and Zita, my housemates for the first three months of 2008, because the ways in which our lives intertwined daily for three months were momentous for me. As I mentioned in the Introduction, when I arrived in Salvador that January of 2008, I had no interest in the subject of intimate partner violence (IPV). What I experienced those first few months of living with Zita and Rita, however, changed the course of my research. Throughout my stay with Rita and Zita, I witnessed the physically and emotionally abusive relationship between Zita and her younger girlfriend, Simone. The presence of IPV in lesbian relationships was not uncommon as I would come to find out through my interactions with lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador; more than half of the thirty-eight women I formally interviewed had been involved in at least one physical incident with a female lover at some point in their lives. These incidents may have involved one or more of the following acts: slapping, punching, scratching, kicking, or burning.

This chapter explores through an experiential approach[1] the subjects of fidelity and violence between female lovers and their relationship with "Brazilian emotionality," erotic embodiment, and gender ideologies. Female same-sex relationships provide women an opportunity to embody fully Brazilian sexual ideals, an opportunity that is limited for women in heterosexual relationships. While infidelity is one consequence of erotic embodiment, I argue that infidelity's attendant emphases on passionate intensity and bodily expression also factor into the presence of IPV in lesbian relationships. Through this focus on infidelity, the chapter delves into IPV and addresses other factors that are associated with this form of interpersonal violence like gender dynamics and class issues. By describing the relationships of women of disparate gender identities and socioeconomic statuses, I demonstrate that violence in lesbian relationships did not, in fact, follow typical scripts that associated masculinity and poverty with IPV. Additionally, this chapter demonstrates that women's experiences with IPV can vary greatly: all acts of aggression are not equal in intent or effect. A nuanced theoretical analysis of IPV necessitates a discussion of the relationships among erotic embodiment, local moral worlds, and the phenomenon of infidelity in lesbian relationships. An incorporation of Arthur Kleinman's notion of "local moral worlds" in my analysis has proven useful because the ideologies of pleasure, passion, intensity, and aggression circulate within specific cultural contexts. These ideologies influence lesbian and *entendida* women's interpretations of extrarelational sex, and an examination of their local moral world leads to a better understanding of how women can physically lash out in anger, irritation, or pain during confrontational encounters with their female lovers. Following this theoretical section is a discussion of two women, Lisete and Susana, and their experiences with extrarelational sexual activities. This foray into the lives of Lisete and Susana illustrate the roles of dominant heteronormative, androcentric, and erotic ideologies in the decision-making processes of the women I encountered in Salvador.

Local Moral Worlds in Salvador

An integral aspect to this discussion of infidelity and IPV in lesbian relationships is an understanding of how Salvador's local moral world is grounded in communal norms about embodiment, dominance, pleasure, and aggression. According to Arthur Kleinman, experience "is thoroughly *intersubjective*. It involves practices, negotiations, contestations among others with whom we are connected. It is a medium in which collective and subjective processes interfuse. We are born into the flow of palpable experience" (1999:359). Like Durkheim, Kleinman recognizes that we do not act in a vacuum; we are *social* creatures. Our lives intersect with each other in such a way that we have experiences because

we are constantly encountering the Other, whose Otherness is shaped by our existence. Consequently, Kleinman stipulates that experience is moral because it has implications beyond the incident itself: "Experience is *moral*, as I define it, because it is the medium of engagement in everyday life in which things are at stake and in which ordinary people are deeply engaged stake-holders who have important things to lose, to gain, and to preserve" (1999:362). For example, in Brazil, one of the "things at stake," whether good or bad, is authenticity in relation to sentimentality and expression. It is important to state clearly, however, that even within this moral world that elevates authenticity, passion, and *fogo* (fire), there are Brazilian cultural restraints placed on bodily expressions in interpersonal relationships. When life itself, permanent bodily damage, and severe physical trauma are "at stake," these conditions have come to supersede local morals that elevate passion and bodily expression in Brazilian society. The ability to ground the presence of a certain degree of interpersonal violence in Salvador to its local moral world does not negate the reality, even in Brazil, that one can easily justify such physical acts ethically. Ethics and ethical discourse in the Western tradition, according to Kleinman, "is usually principle-based, with metatheoretical commentary on the authorization and implication of those principles. (In bioethics, the chief principles are autonomy, beneficence, and justice; they in turn privilege informed consent and confidentiality.) Ethical discourse is reflective and intellectualist, emphasizing cognition (more precisely, in today's jargon, rational choice) over affect or behavior and coherence over the sense of incompleteness and unknowability and uncontrollability that is so prevalent in ordinary life" (1999:363). Ethics are reason-based suppositions that seek to present ultimate truths about reality. Even those societies that do not share the same ethical principles, Kleinman counters, do have norms and "offer a 'should' and a generalizable 'must' about practices" (1999:364). In light of the role of ethics in the shaping of worldviews, a moral approach to understanding IPV in lesbian relationships must recognize that individuals have a "practical engagement" with their local contexts and not with abstract ethical discourses (Kleinman 1999:363–65).

Sexual Betrayal

In addition to influencing attitudes about IPV, the local moral world of Salvador has shaped lesbian and *entendida* women's opinions of and experiences with *traição* (sexual betrayal). Often after I conducted an interview, I asked women if they had any questions for me. The most popular question, by far, was whether or not I had a girlfriend or sexual partner in Salvador: Did I ever betray my wife? To be honest, I was astonished at the number of women who asked me this specific question. It would not be an exaggeration to state that at least *fifteen* women at different times and in various social and private settings inquired

about my sexual life in Salvador. For example, I conducted an interview with a couple at a pizzeria when questions about my potential experiences with infidelity were broached. Of the thirty-eight Brazilian women I interviewed, many of whom were dating or had dated each other, Paula and Tatiana were the only couple I interviewed together in a single session. Paula and Tatiana were friends of mine, and we interacted with each other on several occasions over the course of a year. I had already conducted separate interviews with each woman, but I decided to interview them together because, at this juncture, I thought it would be inconsiderate to interview them individually when they had arrived at the pizzeria together. Since my first interview with each woman had covered a number of topics, I was content with the knowledge that there was only one question I would avoid asking them in each other's presence: Have you ever betrayed your partner? Ironically, at the end of my interview, when I asked them if they had any questions for me, Tatiana inquired: "Are you faithful to your wife?" *Fiel* (faithful) and *traição* (betrayal) were the words women consistently used in our discussions of extrarelational sexual activities. (I never asked a woman if she had "cheated" or even "betrayed" her wife or girlfriend. Instead, I would ask her if she had sex with another woman outside of her relationship with her girlfriend or wife.) I gave them the same response—the truth—that I gave everyone who asked me this question: "My wife and I agreed that we would be faithful to each other and that neither of us would have sex with another person." Tatiana responded that for her, Paula, or any Brazilian, it would be hard to be faithful to a person if they lived in another city, and it would be especially "difficult" (their word) if the person was in another country. Paula admitted that Tatiana was worried about their relationship because Paula wanted to do an internship in another region of Brazil or maybe even in Argentina. Tatiana did not think Paula would be able to be faithful to her. In the end, they both admitted that it would be difficult to remain monogamous if they were in my position. Paula's and Tatiana's admitted difficulty with the idea of monogamy in long-distance or cross-continental relationships was not uncommon. When I made the previous statement to other women, many were incredulous at my decision, repeatedly asking me the same question about my fidelity status. One woman even wanted to know if this decision also excluded kissing (it did).

I provide these stories not to present myself as a virtuous woman but in order to elucidate the relationship between these women's viewpoints about fidelity and their own experiences with infidelity or sexual betrayal. In contrast to the seeming reality of, or at least belief about, heterosexual women's sexual fidelity to their boyfriends and husbands, the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women with extrarelational sexual activities resembled the behavior and attitudes of Brazilian men rather than women. As noted in the Introduction, Brazil has a contradictory relationship with women's sexuality. Brazilian

women are expected to be passionate and intense human beings and, as women, innately sensual and seductive temptresses who are full of emotion, but not full of sex (Goldstein 2003:238; Gregg 2003:36–37, 107; McCallum 1999:285; Salem 2004:56). Cecilia McCallum addresses this tension: "Both men's and women's bodies contain forces and desires. Women's bodily desires are to be restrained, their expression in sexual intercourse censured, their fertility suppressed" (1999:284). Even though Brazilian women possess a sexual fire that radiates heat and attracts men to their "flame," they must be mindful not to flame too brightly or uncontrollably. While control of women's sexuality is both a personal and societal effort, Brazilian men are allowed to indulge their sexual uncontrollability at will (Salem 2004:16). One could extrapolate that there are three prevailing sexual ideologies that are influential in the Brazilian "local moral world": Brazilians are a sexual people, Brazilian women must suppress their sexual fire and be faithful to men, and Brazilian men do not have to control their sexual desires (Goldstein 2003:238; Gregori 1993:155; Lamego and Noronha 2008:82). Philandering behavior on the part of a woman is still considered a taboo in Brazilian society and represents her husband's lack of "control" over her, thereby making him a cuckold. The *cornudo* (cuckolded man) is stigmatized in his community because "men regard female infidelity as destructive of masculinity" (Rebhun 1999). Thus cuckoldry is intimately related with emasculation because the inability of a man to control his wife's or girlfriend's sexual behavior indicates his submissive status in the relationship. For example, a man could have two separate households or a longtime mistress, and this demonstration of sexual prowess would reinforce the hegemonic order. If either of "his" women were to cheat on him, however, the sullying of his masculinity would necessitate retribution—physical aggression or "compensatory violence" (Hautzinger 2007:95). The relationship between men's justifiable violence and women's sexual betrayal is one important indicator of the interconnections between social hierarchies, cultural ideologies, and aggression. These interconnecting gendered and sexual paradigms directly governed heterosexual women's sexual behavior and communal responses to their infidelity. On the other hand, dominant social and cultural ideologies only indirectly governed, and rather poorly, the behavior of the lesbian and *entendida* women I encountered in Salvador. Of the thirty-eight women I formally interviewed, twenty-two reported that they had engaged in extrarelational sexual activities—sexual betrayal. Nine women stated that they had never had sex with a woman outside of their relationships (one of them purportedly lied), and the fidelity status of seven women in the study was unknown. To offer this information more succinctly: out of the thirty women, only *eight* had always been sexually faithful to a girlfriend or wife. Notwithstanding the limitations of my small sample size, there did not seem to be any relation between sexual fidelity and a woman's

race, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, religion, or level of educational attainment. Lesbian and *entendida* women of all kinds, like heterosexual men of all kinds, sexually betrayed their wives and girlfriends in Salvador. The next section delves into Susana's and Lisete's experiences with and opinions about sexual betrayal, both of whom have been discussed in previous chapters.

Susana

Susana's story of sexual betrayal is one of the most intriguing cases in my study for reasons that have less to do with the actual betrayal and more to do with her statements to me about infidelity. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Susana was a thirty-eighty-year-old woman who was middle-class, educated, and a self-identified *mulata*, and she lived with her parents at the time of the interview. She was dissatisfied with her home life because her mother actively sought to interfere in her romantic relationships with other women. The first time I met Susana was at a birthday party for her girlfriend of five years, Rosana, in September 2008. The party was held at a bar in one of the middle-class neighborhoods in Salvador. I was invited to the party by a friend of Susana and Rosana who thought neither of them would mind if I joined their celebration. The vast majority of the people there were white and light brown–skinned middle- and upper-middle-class lesbian women who all seemed to know each other. Some of them even jokingly compared themselves to the Showtime series *The L Word*. A couple of weeks beforehand, I had met some of the women at a different bar, which made it easier for me to be introduced to new people at this event because I had been previously vetted. I was introduced to Susana and Rosana and began to engage them in conversation, explaining my research project and my interest in learning about the experiences of lesbian women in Salvador. In the beginning of the conversation, most of my comments were directed to Rosana who was amazed and surprised that someone would be interested in studying such a topic. Rosana became particularly impressed when I stated I was a graduate student at Harvard University, and she led with this information when she introduced me to her friends at the bar. While Susana was off socializing with other people, Rosana, seemingly comfortable with me, confided that Susana was only her second girlfriend and lover as she had only been with men until her midtwenties. Susana happened to rejoin us again as we were discussing children, and it emerged that Rosana wanted children and Susana did not. Once Susana returned, we discussed the period of her life when she lived in France for three months. Perhaps because I spent more time talking with Rosana, it seemed that Rosana was more comfortable conversing with me than Susana was. Nevertheless, I asked Susana if I could interview her, and she agreed. Months later, and after interacting with Susana on a few other occasions, I conducted two interviews with her at the end of April 2009. On the

topic of fidelity, Susana was quite loquacious. Susana's thoughts about passion, uncontrollability, women's complexity, and the differences between loyalty and fidelity closely resembled statements I heard from many women in Salvador. Like Susana, various women opined that disloyalty was more damaging to a relationship than infidelity because sexual betrayal was not the worst form of betrayal. Unlike disloyalty, at least for Susana, the desire to be unfaithful was not a "rational emotion that you could control." For other women, as well, this differentiation between loyalty and fidelity appeared to be rooted in a distinction between bodily desires and emotional considerations. The embodied passion that was experienced with a potential or new lover could overpower, but only temporarily, the more cerebral love a woman felt for her girlfriend or wife. Despite Susana's seeming endorsement of infidelity, and the ease with which it could occur, she plainly stated that she had not in fact ever betrayed Rosana. Susana was a "one-woman woman."

Three months later, a different story emerged about Susana's relationship with Rosana. Susana betrayed Rosana. Soon after my second interview with Susana on April 26, 2009, I left for the United States and returned to Salvador approximately three months later in July 2009. One of the first people I saw upon my return was Angelina, Susana's relative. Almost immediately, Angelina began to express anger about Susana's betrayal. She called Susana a "psychopath" because she had lied to Angelina for months about her extrarelational sexual activities. Before my return to Salvador, Susana told everyone that she had only betrayed Rosana four times. However, a few days before I returned in July, Susana's second girlfriend sent Rosana her email correspondences with Susana. According to the emails, Susana and her second girlfriend had been in a relationship for seven months, and upon learning this information, Rosana fainted. I never asked Susana about the veracity of Angelina's claims because I believed Angelina for several reasons. First, Angelina is a close relative of Susana's. Second, I trusted Angelina's judgment and knowledge of the situation. Third, Susana did not talk in our interview like someone who was faithful to her girlfriend. Her statements expressed a rather forgiving or even cavalier attitude about infidelity, and I was therefore not surprised to hear about her second girlfriend. And it was because of her statements about fidelity, and not because of her actual infidelity, that I decided to include Susana's story. Susana's thoughts were emblematic of beliefs that were shared by many women I encountered in Salvador. In my view, lesbian and *entendida* women rejected Brazilian sexual ideologies that mandated the suppression of women's sexuality and valorized female sexual fidelity.

Lisete

In contrast to Susana's focus on the uncontrollability of passionate emotions and the likelihood of infidelity, Lisete was decidedly more "masculine" in her approach to the subject of fidelity: she could cheat, but her girlfriend could not. Considering Lisete's self-identification as both the active and masculine partner in her relationship with Fernanda, her distinctly heteronormative conceptions about sexual fidelity were unsurprising. According to Lisete, she was like a man and always noticed and stared when a beautiful woman walked by, raising the ire of Fernanda. Overall, Lisete stated that Fernanda was an extremely jealous person who was watchful of Lisete's behavior toward other women. Though Lisete had experienced feelings of jealousy in previous relationships, she stated that Fernanda inspired total confidence in her, and she wholeheartedly believed in Fernanda's sexual fidelity to her. Lisete's statements on the subject of sexual betrayal further reveal her active/masculine mentality:

> ANDREA: Do you have sex with anyone outside your relationship?
>
> LISETE: Do I betray [cheat]? You are asking if I betray [cheat]?
>
> ANDREA: I don't use the word "betrayal" [cheating] because some people don't think that way, so . . .
>
> LISETE: See, my girlfriend, she does not like betrayal at all—she is super loyal. She gives me a hard time about it. And so, if she was with somebody who she didn't love anymore, instead of cheating, she would just break up with her. She doesn't want to screw over anyone. She thinks a lot about that. But I'm self-centered, I think that I can betray [cheat] but not be betrayed.
>
> ANDREA: And if she did the same thing and you knew about it?
>
> LISETE: I'd end it.
>
> ANDREA: Why?
>
> LISETE: I'm very self-centered. I like it only for me, only for me.
>
> ANDREA: So you can do that, but she can't?
>
> LISETE: It's that I can't manage to adjust myself to that. It's not because I can do it and the other person doesn't have the same rights, you understand, but I fail in this. I think that's the reason why I don't have the conditions to be married to someone. Marriage, I think not. Because the possibility of knowing that Fernanda was having sex with another woman, she wouldn't do it for me anymore. That is what I say to her if she betrayed me, I wouldn't touch her body again—she would lose her purity for me. I think she wouldn't be something good for me to touch. I don't know why I think this way. It's self-centeredness, but that's the way I am.

Her conception of sexual fidelity and betrayal clearly resembled dominant heteronormative and androcentric discourses about gender roles and expectations in romantic relationships. By stating that she would not want to touch her

girlfriend's body because it had lost its purity, Lisete reinforced cultural beliefs that granted men possession over women's bodies. It was as if the sexual betrayal would permanently become ingrained into Fernanda's body, making Fernanda herself an ever present reminder of Lisete's loss of power and dominance. For Lisete, she would become the passive partner, thereby echoing her status as the "feminine" partner in her past romantic and sexual relationships with men.

Sexual Betrayal and Femininity

While Lisete's conception of sexual fidelity indicates the influence of dominant sexual and gender ideologies that differentiate active/masculine and passive/feminine behavior, the sexual betrayals of lesbian and *entendida* women fall outside the purview, or even the concern, of society because there is no cuckolded male partner. Furthermore, while Lisete's feminine partner was always faithful, both masculine and feminine lesbian and *entendida* women in my study betrayed their partners. From a cultural standpoint, one might expect that because a masculine lesbian would likely have the same response as a man would have to betrayal—violent confrontation—a feminine partner would be hesitant and fearful to behave in this manner. This would be reasonable considering the experiences and attitudes of some of the active and/or masculine lesbian women in my study, which were exemplified by Lisete's stance toward the possibility of her girlfriend's sexual betrayal. Based on my research, I would argue that a wronged active or masculine lesbian cannot look for the communal or cultural acknowledgement of her grievances; she is only cuckolded in her own mind. Also, the cultural and sexual constraints that are placed on women in heterosexual relationships are absent, to a large degree, in women's romantic relationships with each other. Hence there is a higher likelihood that there would be more women in same-sex relationships who betrayed their lovers than in heterosexual relationships. Alongside the premium placed on passion, emotionality, intensity, and domination in this local moral world, there is also a conflicting belief in constraint, submission, and restrained *feminine* sexuality. Therefore in lesbian and *entendida* women's relationships with each other, they have the freedom to disregard heterosexual and heteronormative constructions of women's sexuality. Of course, there are women who fully adopt these societal norms and do try to dominate their wife or girlfriend, regardless of either woman's beliefs about active/passive sexuality. Nevertheless, lesbian women's efforts do not have the same moral weight as men's even though they deploy the same cultural discourses in their response. Despite the lack of respect that is given to same-sex relationships within a Brazilian cultural context, lesbian and *entendida* women have more freedom in their sexual decision making. Ultimately, they can be less concerned about societal mores that involve women's chastity, fidelity, and/or their roles as sexual objects for men. Nonheterosexual

women can experience Brazilian erotic embodiment from a standpoint that acknowledges the uncontrollable carnality of desire as a superior ideal in relation to sexual fidelity. While lesbian women's freedom may seemingly be liberating, unrestrained erotic embodiment can cause negative consequences, the most pronounced of which is IPV. In my discussion of erotic embodiment, I understand it as a concept that encompasses more than a focus on bodily pleasures or a woman's preference for specific sexual acts. Instead, the concept incorporates the social, cultural, and historical forces that shape how lesbian and *entendida* women move, emote, and act while also recognizing the specificity of their experiences. This incorporation acknowledges that lesbian erotic embodiment is not directly beholden to the heteronormative power structures even as lesbian and *entendida* women's violent behavior toward each other is largely a product of these systems. The manifestation of IPV in lesbian relationships occurs, *in part*, because the elevation of passion and bodily pleasures as almost sacrosanct is a moral ideology that is socialized into the bodies of Brazilian women and men and women. This ideology hyperesteems the performance of all sentiments, whether creative or destructive, through bodily expression, thus creating space for the emergence of both physical aggression and the acceptance of this "sanctioned" bodily response.

Intimate Partner Violence in Salvador

In this section, I discuss the influence of Brazilian emotionality and erotic embodiment through an ethnographic analysis of lesbian women's various experiences and conceptions about IPV. The majority of the material addressed in this section describes the relationships of my housemates and their friends in Lagoa Grande, focusing on events that occurred in the spring of 2008. This material is culled from my field notes and statements from interviews with my housemates Rita and Zita. Later, the chapter will grapple with the issues of class, socioeconomic status, and gender in a discussion of IPV in lesbian relationships. Finally, the chapter concludes with a focus on a black lesbian activist who was physically aggressive with one of her ex-girlfriends and her self-analysis of the situation. Of all the women I interviewed who perpetrated IPV against their female lovers, Patrícia was the most self-aware and reflective about her own role as the aggressor in violent conflicts. Patrícia's involvement with IPV further indicates the degree to which violence, the desire for dominance, and a focus on bodily expression influence lesbian women's relationships with each other.

Rita and Zita

Zita first met Rita when she was working odd jobs and living in the house of her on-again, off-again older lover Monica. At this stage in her life, Zita did not

have steady employment, lived far from her family, and was in the midst of trying to save her relationship with Monica even though she knew that Monica no longer wanted to be her girlfriend. The age disparity between Zita and her lover Monica was common among women in sexual relationships with each other in Salvador, and it was not atypical for there to be a fifteen- to twenty-year age difference between two women. I was told that younger women were attracted to older women because they were thought to be mature, more financially stable, and in overall command of their lives. For older women, younger women represented youthful beauty and energy, and they were thought to be more malleable as romantic partners. Women also repeatedly stated that older women wanted to dominate and control their partners, which would be easier to do with a much younger female companion. Consequently, after intense pursuit from Rita, who was an older woman with stability, Zita became a housewife. On a superficial level, it could be construed that Zita fulfilled the feminine role because she was less masculine than Rita, the *bofe*. Owing to Zita's situation, however, their relationship was more a reflection of an age/circumstance dynamic than a gender dynamic. Still unemployed after they separated in 2001, Zita remained Rita's housemate and friend, and when Zita became employed and Rita unemployed, there was a role reversal in their relationship, which I believe was a testament to the force of Zita's personality. Even as Rita continued to contribute financially to the household, she became the "housewife," and so while Zita worked, Rita had taken over from her the responsibilities of cooking and cleaning for the household. Once, when I was washing some of my clothes in the outside sink adjacent to the house, Zita complained that Rita should be doing the washing because it was her responsibility. Another afternoon, Zita rebuked Rita because she had not cooked enough for the day, and she also expressed dislike for the new house that Rita rented for the both of them. In response, Rita retorted that she did cook and clean a lot and only left the house once her work was done. She stated that Zita just wanted her to stay in the house all day. In describing this scene in my field notes, I wrote, "the conversation was like a stereotypical married couple conversation." Their banter, and to some extent Zita's gall, was revealing because Rita was the one who paid most of the bills, she rented the house where Zita resided, and she was the "homemaker" as well.

The relationship between Rita and Zita could not be easily categorized or reduced to an example of masculine/feminine interplay in the domestic space as shifting power dynamics characterized their years together as a romantic couple and then as platonic friends. While they were a couple, they fought physically with each other, both acting as the aggressor or the first to react violently. After they separated, Rita continued to provide Zita with money, and Zita kept living with Rita at the latter's behest. According to Rita, she felt motherly and sisterly toward Zita and felt compassion for her because she knew that it would

be difficult for Zita to return to her mother's house. Ultimately, she did not want to leave Zita homeless. Over the next five to six years, there were times when Zita wanted to move, and Rita would persuade her stay and unpack her suitcases after she changed her mind. On the other hand, there were other times when Rita wanted Zita to move, but Zita resisted, and she would sometimes lock Rita out of her own home. Rita would spend the night in the streets or at Rui's house where he lived with his mother. I asked Rita why she did not more actively compel Zita to leave, and she responded that if she forced Zita to leave that Zita could file a complaint with the police against her. Even though Rita intimated that she was "stuck" with Zita, she still acted in a subservient manner toward her, which I witnessed throughout my stay with them. For example, Zita and I each had our own room and Rita slept on the floor in the living room with a sheet and a pillow. Even after I moved out of their house and they moved to a less expensive house that Rita, not Zita, had rented, Rita still slept on the floor there. Once, I asked her why she slept on the floor, and Rita did not respond. Instead, she gestured and indicated that she did not care. In an interview, Rita mentioned to me how she had suffered a lot in her life due past relationships with women, including Zita, who had treated her badly. Despite the hardship she experienced in her friendship with Zita, she was still conflicted about the possibility of Zita's departure from her house, vacillating between wanting Zita to stay and wanting her to go. Even when Zita began a serious relationship with someone else, Rita allowed her to stay in her home, and Zita's girlfriend would visit and often spend the night.

Zita and Simone

Similar to her relationship with Rita but only more intense, Zita's most recent relationship with Simone was characterized by mistrust, friction, and violence. Simone was eighteen and slender, with medium-brown skin and eyes, and metal braces on her teeth. She typically wore her long hair in a ponytail-bun hairstyle. Simone was considered an attractive young woman whose silhouette—small breasts and curvaceous backside—represented the ideal feminine body type in Brazilian culture. Despite Simone's youth, she had been in romantic relation-ships with both women and men, and according to Zita, Simone had pursued her. When they met, Zita was involved with another woman who lived in the interior of Bahia. Because she was still living with Rita and did not have steady employment, Zita was hesitant to begin a relationship with Simone. Once she became single, she was still apprehensive about dating Simone because of her relationship and living situation with Rita. Zita said: "Because of Rita. She doesn't want me to go. I tried to create another bond of friendship with her, like she is my mother. My mother lives far from here, and I think of her like my mother, understand, a love for a mother or a sister." Despite her misgivings

and anxiety about Rita's feelings, Zita succumbed to Simone's advances: "She asked me for a kiss . . . And she asked me to give her a response, and I said, girl, give me some more time. And she said no, for me, there exists no time. Simone spoke these words to me. 'For me, there exists no time.' Yes or no? I said, 'OK, I'm good. Let's see how it goes.'" The push-pull dynamic that was present in the beginning of Zita's and Simone's relationship continued throughout their time together and would manifest itself in both verbal and physical altercations. The first time I witnessed a heated argument between Zita and Simone was five weeks into my three-month stay at Rita's home in Lagoa Grande. I recreated the encounter in my field notes as follows:

> I returned from my Portuguese tutoring session, and only Rita was home. Soon after, Rui, Zita, and Simone arrived. It was Simone's birthday, but Zita and Simone immediately go into Zita's bedroom. Zita exits her room and returns to the living room with Rita's pillow and sheet in hand. Rita makes a face, showing her annoyance, because she wants the rest of her sleeping materials. Fifteen minutes later, Rita asks Rui to go into Zita's bedroom to retrieve the rest of her items. As Zita and Simone argue in the bedroom, Rui, Rita, and I sit in the living room and listen. Simone, then Zita, leave the bedroom and come into the living room with us. Crying, Simone seems to want the argument to end in "consideration" of my presence, and they return to the bedroom. I, too, go to my bedroom. Since I can clearly hear Simone loudly yelling at Zita, I decide I might as well return to the living room. I enter just as Zita is sitting down on the couch and Simone is still yelling at her, calling her a *vagabunda* (bitch), dishonest, and insincere. Through tears, Simone states that her birthday was going well and now it is bad. Periodically, Zita would respond and alter between insulting Simone and asking her to leave. Finally, Zita tells Simone that she should "*vai ser prostituta*" (go be a prostitute) and that she disrespects her mother and grandmother by her behavior. Throughout the fight, Rui and Rita are gesturing to me with their hands, intimating that Simone is drunk. Again, I return to my bedroom, unsure of what to do, and I hear what sounds like scuffling in the living room. Upon hearing the noise, I go back into the living room and hear Rita ask Simone to respect her house and be quiet or leave. Still crying and talking, Simone does not do as Rita asks, and thus Rita confronts Zita about the situation. Seeming to reach her breaking point, Zita throws her cell phone in Simone's direction, and the cell phone falls apart. Later, in the kitchen, Rui tells me that Simone does not respect anyone when she is drunk. After a while, Zita lays on the floor and goes to sleep. Eventually Simone leaves and stands outside the house gate and continues to cry. Days later, I see them back together and lying in each other arms on the couch. (field note, March 4, 2008)

I witnessed or heard many arguments between Simone and Zita, and at times I saw the hours-old marks on their necks or faces from their recent

violent encounters. Usually, after witnessing such incidents, I would question Rui about the nature of their fights. For instance, the day after the first fight I witnessed between them, which I described in my field note, I asked Rui why Zita told Simone to "go be a prostitute." Rui replied that there was a rumor that Simone slept with a particular man for money, hence Zita's retort. Rui told me—and I later corroborated in conversations with Zita—that Zita was typically the aggressor or the first to react violently in a fight or out of anger even though Simone sometimes would initiate a physical encounter as well.

During essentially my entire stay in Lagoa Grande, Zita and Simone were engaged in a tumultuous relationship with each other that Simone wanted to end. Zita would not accept her decision and repeatedly called Simone. She would visit the home of Simone's grandmother, where Simone lived, and ask to speak with her. Oftentimes after Zita's visits, Simone would come to Lagoa Grande to talk with Zita because she did not want to be confronted at her grandmother's house. During March and April 2008, Zita and Simone separated several times, reuniting only after Simone succumbed to Zita's exhortations. One of the primary reasons that she would eventually acquiesce to Zita's demands, according to Rui and Zita, was because she was afraid of her. Simone was afraid Zita would hurt her if she did not return. Another memorable fight they had occurred early one morning in the beginning of April. I described the encounter in my field notes:

> While sleeping, I am awakened by crying. Looking at my cell phone clock, I realize that it is six o'clock in the morning, and I hear the roosters in a vacant lot near the house crowing. Zita is crying, hysterically, and I hear her cry for another twenty minutes. Suddenly, I hear things being thrown, objects crashing, and her asking Rui to "help me, help me." Simone is telling Zita to "chill out" (*paraí, rapaz, paraí*—chill, man, chill). "I don't want you any more, I don't want you anymore," Simone repeated. Simone wants to leave Zita's bedroom, but Zita will not let her pass. Finally, Rui convinces her to let Simone go. Zita argues with Simone and tells her she should be ashamed and mentions her grandmother. Simone says that it is an "ugly thing" for Zita to involve her family. She does not want to fight anymore, and she repeats "I'm leaving, I'm leaving" and "I don't need this." Simone leaves the house, and they go outside; Rui walks her home. Around seven-thirty in the morning, while listening to the roosters crowing, dogs barking, and loud music blaring, Zita enters my bedroom. She apologizes and tells me that she is not the type of person to let her emotions show, but when things end, she feels it and demonstrates it. She could not accept that Simone wanted to end it, she told me. She said that it's hard to end a relationship when you like a person. Zita apologized to me throughout this conversation. (field note, April 6, 2008)

A couple of days after this early morning fight, Zita and I talked about her relationship with Simone. Zita was rather candid and matter-of-fact about her violent behavior and its effect on her relationship with Simone:

> **ZITA:** The majority of the fights we had were physical. Simone was very emotional, and she would sometimes hit me and I would hit her back . . . Many times I would say things to her and she didn't want to hear it so she would try to raise her hand against me. I would tell her, do not raise your against me, because if you do, you are going to have to hit me because I will hit you. And when she would raise her hand and do nothing, I would hit her. Now she says to me that she is tired of me beating her. Tired of being beaten by me.

According to Zita, and this was confirmed by Rui, Simone would sometimes initiate physical altercations with Zita. In response, Zita stated that she had to defend herself. Despite Simone's provocations, Zita stated that she was much more aggressive with Simone than vice versa.

When Zita assessed her own aggressive tendencies, she stated that Simone was still responsible for the violence for two specific reasons: Simone made physical threats against her, and Simone was dishonest and untrustworthy. For Zita, Simone's threats of violence or an upraised hand toward her justified a violent response. Furthermore, Simone had a history of cancelling visits and other broken promises, which infuriated Zita. Likewise, Simone's lies and omissions were reminders of the rumors about Simone's extrarelational sexual activities with both women and men. In response, Zita reacted with both physical and emotional abuse. Zita would humiliate Simone in front of people because she felt humiliated herself. A few days after Zita and I conversed about their relationship, Simone returned to our house, but she did not enter and stood at its threshold. At first, she and Zita calmly discussed their relationship outside, but then they began to shout at each other. Rui encouraged both of them to enter the house to finish their argument, but Simone would not enter and stated that she was afraid of Zita. Specifically, she was afraid that Zita would attack her with a knife, repeatedly stating this fear. Eventually, Simone left. This was a frequent scenario in April: Simone would come to the house but not enter; she and Zita would talk and scream at each other while one or both of them cried; finally, Simone would either leave or stay the night.

Zita's predicament with Simone and her anguish about the situation were similar to a situation she went through with her ex-lover/friend/housemate Rita. While they were a couple, and after Zita began living with Rita, Rita allowed another woman to move into her house. Lissa was a sex worker and had been living with another sex worker, Helena, who was a friend and neighbor of Zita and Rita. After a dispute between Lissa and Helena, Lissa moved in with

the couple. During the same period, according to Zita, she realized that she no longer had romantic feelings for Rita, and in her mind, they were not together. Rita, however, still thought that they were together, and Zita did not disabuse her of this thinking. After Lissa moved in, she and Zita spent a lot of time together during the day because neither had steady and dependable employment, and they began to develop feelings for each other. Thus, while Rita was at work, Zita and Lissa often had sex in the house. At times, Rita questioned Zita about her relationship with Lissa, and Zita denied everything, stating that Lissa was just a friend. Finally, after having a nine-month relationship with Lissa and months of lying, Zita told Rita the truth. According to Zita, one of the reasons she had denied the relationship was because neither she nor Lissa had jobs or places to live. Zita only agreed to tell Rita "something" if Rita agreed not to take any action upon hearing the news. Rita agreed and kept her word. Once their romantic relationship ended, Zita continued to live with and receive money from Rita. She also continued her relationship with Lissa who moved out of Rita's house. Zita sometimes used the money that Rita gave her to rent a motel room in order to be with Lissa. Months later, Lissa disappeared, and Zita only saw her again two years after her disappearance. In light of all this, it was quite understandable when Rita stated to Zita: "Everything you did to me, Simone is now doing to you." Considering Zita's own extrarelational sexual activities, it was fascinating that Zita had such a strong stance against not only infidelity but dishonesty as well. To be honest, despite my myriad interactions with Zita, I did not have the chutzpah to ask her how she could have such a virulent and violent response to Simone's betrayals when she had acted in a similar and perhaps an even more egregious fashion toward Rita. Regardless of Zita's conceptions about her own past actions, it was clear that for Zita, a violent response was one of the possible and justifiable responses to infidelity and jealousy.

I distinctly remember the last fight that I saw or overheard between Zita and Simone, which occurred at the end of April. It was at night, and I was preparing to give a lecture, in Portuguese, at the Center for Afro-Oriental Studies, a center affiliated with the Federal University of Bahia. I was sitting on my bed in my bedroom preparing my lecture notes. The windows were open because it was a balmy night. Since my room is next to the front door of the house, I often heard, and sometimes saw, the progression of Zita and Simone's numerous arguments. This particular night, they repeatedly entered and exited the house for several hours, alternating between calmly talking and openly arguing with each other. On several occasions, I heard "scuffling" as well. Toward the end of their fight, Simone began to sing religious songs from Candomblé as Zita continued to taunt her. For at least a half an hour, Simone sang, loudly, until she finally reentered the house and went into Zita's bedroom. While this fight was the last I saw, it was not their last in April, nor did their relationship end

that month. Though I left Brazil a couple of weeks after this particular fight, I continued to receive reports on the situation from Rui, who informed me that Zita and Simone continued to argue, fight, separate, and get back together again for some time after.

This cycle of reconciliation and separation between Zita and Simone appeared to have ended in September 2008 during the tenth annual pride parade in Salvador. It is during the retelling of this experience that Zita stated "*Tirei sangue dela*" ("I took her blood"). I began the Preface—and the book—with this expression because, of the women I encountered in Brazil, Zita was one of the most articulate and explicit in describing her thoughts about violence and her use of it. Thus I was not surprised to hear her state in November 2008, "*tenho vontade a matar ela*" ("I wanna kill her"). We talked as I sat on a black and gold checkered couch in Zita's living room; she was grooming her nails after having taken a shower. She explained that definitive knowledge of Simone's past "betrayals" had caused her to physically assault Simone and "almost kill her" several weeks before my present visit. Zita was "not well," and she yearned for *vingança* (revenge) against Simone. Behind Zita's desire for vengeance was her belief that "*Ninguem aceita traição*" ("No one accepts betrayal").

A few months later, in March 2009, Zita seemed less angry with Simone over her betrayal. Zita was "*mais calma*" ("calmer") and, by all accounts, had not sought her revenge. She responded "no" when I asked her if she was "still crazy about Simone." Despite this response, Zita was not dating anyone because she was waiting for Simone—who currently had both a boyfriend and a girlfriend who did not know about each other—to come back to her. Zita's calmness evaporated soon after—she again became enraged with Simone when the latter filed a complaint against her at the local police station. (In Brazil, individuals can file assault complaints that are investigated by the police, a topic that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.) I happened to be visiting Lagoa Grande in early May 2009 on the day that Zita appeared before the police to provide them with her testimony. Sitting outside at the neighborhood bar, Zita was incredulous that Simone had filed a complaint against her and answered in the affirmative when I asked if she was angry at Simone.

Violence in Lesbian Relationships

These descriptions of IPV in Lagoa Grande would seemingly bolster the perception that violence in lesbian relationships is an issue directly related to class, education, and to some extent, race. Based on my research, however, I found that the twenty-three lesbian and *entendida* women who had been involved in at least one physical form of IPV with a present or past female lover were of varying socioeconomic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. As noted in the

Introduction, the category of IPV encompasses not only physical violence but also sexual, psychological, emotional, and mental violence. In this study, IPV was only considered in the realm of the use of physical force, spanning a spectrum: mild (slapping, pushing, or shoving) to severe (punching, hard pushing, kicking, or in several instances, burning by lighter). Based on this criterion, twenty-three women's experiences ranged from singular to repeated incidences of mild and/or severe forms of physical violence or aggression. It should be noted that while sexual violence is, unfortunately, a reality for some women in same-sex relationships (Bernhard 2000; Girshick 2002; Sloan and Edmond 1996; Wang 2011), none of the women in the study stated or indicated that they had been the perpetrators or victims of sexual violence in their romantic relationships with women. On the other hand, thirteen women—a little more than half—indicated that they were the aggressor during at least one violent encounter: six indicated that they had engaged in repeated and severe forms of physical violence; three indicated that they had engaged in repeated and mild forms of physical violence; two did not indicate how many instances or the severity of the physical violence that they perpetrated; and only one indicated that she had engaged in a mild form of physical violence. For all the women who perpetrated violence, infidelity and jealousy were given as the primary reasons why violence had occurred in their relationship(s). A minority of these women thought their desire to dominate or be in the power position with their partner was a leading factor as well. Among these same women, eleven of the thirteen women stated that they were physically assaulted by their girlfriends or wives, usually on repeated occasions. Overall, women's experiences reveal several findings: "violence" is a contested category of experience; the socioeconomic status, level of educational attainment, and race of a woman were not concrete indicators of the presence or absence of IPV in her relationships; *bofe* and *leides* both engaged in physical aggression; and a woman's social consciousness or participation in lesbian activism did not preclude the possibility of her perpetration of IPV. Regardless of whether or not a woman had experiences with physical aggression in her lesbian relationship, I observed that what women considered an act of "violence" varied depending on the level of violence, the gender of the perpetrator, and the precipitating act that supposedly instigated this response. Some downplayed their encounters and did not consider them to be a form of "violence." For example, during formal interviews when I would ask women if they ever had a "physical fight" with their girlfriends, a few would answer in the negative. Later in the interview, the same women would be telling a story in response to another question and a different narrative would emerge. Furthermore, a few women did not consider repeated acts of shoving, pushing, and slapping as very problematic, and they opined that physical altercations were expressions of womanly "craziness."

Maria and Gina, who were in a relationship together, exemplified this attitude about violence between women.

Maria and Gina

Maria and Gina were two middle-class self-identified lesbian women who experienced more than one episode of mutual violence in their relationship with each other, and both women seemed to explain the presence of violence as a manifestation of typical "lesbian drama"—an unavoidable consequence of same-sex relationships between two women. Maria and Gina began to have physical fights toward the end of their almost three-year relationship. Gina, a lawyer with a part-time private practice, was a twenty-seven-year-old light brown–skinned woman with short brown hair. She lived with her mother in a more middle-class section of a mixed-income neighborhood in Salvador. Her girlfriend, Maria, was twenty-three; had long, curly brown hair; and had light brown skin as well. Maria was a law student and worked a full-time job as a government employee, and she had her own apartment near downtown Salvador that was close to her office. Recently, she had moved into her mother's apartment in an upscale neighborhood farther from the downtown area because of a fire in her apartment. Despite the location of her mother's residence in an upper-middle-class neighborhood, Maria's family was not as financially secure as Gina's family. Maria's father died when she was young, and she began working to help her mother support the family while still a teenager. Gina was Maria's first serious girlfriend, and Gina believed that her relationship problems stemmed from Maria's jealousy, insecurity, and low self-esteem. During arguments toward the end of their relationship, Maria accused Gina of infidelity and sometimes hit her in retaliation for Gina's perceived unfaithfulness. Other times, Gina would be the first to strike a blow out of jealousy. Gina characterized Maria and herself as "very explosive" people, and she felt that in general women were temperamental. Gina experienced "a lot of anger" and felt "crazy" when she initiated fights with Maria. She scoffed in response to my question about whether they ever fought in public, and she laughingly mentioned that they sometimes fought in her car. In addition, neither used the words *violença* (violence) or *violenta* (violent) in their individual interviews with me to describe the acts of being slapped and/or pushed or in connection with their "fights."

Intimate Partner Violence, Race, and Class

Gina's and Maria's experiences with physical aggression in their lesbian relationship are not representative of the range of experiences with IPV that women discussed. Their story is revealing, however, because they represent the experiences of the upper-middle-class, middle-class, and educated nonblack women in my study. Of these ten women, three had been involved repeatedly in mild forms

of IPV, and two other women slapped their girlfriends on one occasion. Despite the presence of some form of physical violence in their relationships or in the relationships of their peers, some still expressed to me the idea that domestic abuse was associated with the lower classes. Often, when I spoke about my research and specifically mentioned that I studied violence, several middle-class, educated, and nonblack women suggested that IPV was a problem in the *bairros populares* (popular or working-class/poor neighborhoods). After interviewing and socializing with women of different colors/races, educational backgrounds, gender identities, and financial means, I observed a different reality because IPV was not uncommon in lesbian relationships across socioeconomic strata. Overall, while working-class and poor women were more habitually involved in violent altercations that were more severe in nature, the presence of IPV among the more financially stable demographic of lesbian women contradicts prevailing notions that poor and working-class lesbian women are demonstrably more violent. This finding is particularly significant because working-class and poor women are also more likely to be *bofes*, who are stereotyped as the main perpetrators of violence. Since it was unusual to have romantic relationships between two *bofes*, it is significant that the majority of the eleven women who had engaged in the mutual perpetration of IPV were not *bofes*.

Gender and Violence

In the previous chapter, I discussed the experiences of three *bofe* or masculine lesbian women, Rita, Alice, and Roberta. Of these three women, all had experienced IPV as both an aggressor and a victim, but only Roberta and Alice were the primary aggressors in their relationships. As for Rita, she had been involved in relationships in which physical aggression was mutually initiated by each woman. Once, Rita's more feminine ex-girlfriend had threatened her with a knife. Additionally, there were other women in my study who would have been considered the more "masculine" partner in their relationships with women because of their clothing choices (jeans, t-shirts, and loose-fitting clothing) and their appearance (short hair and no makeup). They too had mixed experiences with IPV.

Roberta

There is a certain irony to the different displays of masculinity performed by Rita and Roberta. In the bedroom, Rita had strict rules that governed her active/ masculine sexuality, but at times she found herself the "submissive" in the overall relationship. In contrast, Roberta partially ignored such stringently gendered sexual categories in the bedroom but was more "manly" and dominant outside the bedroom, excluding her relationship with Helena. When Roberta and Helena met, Roberta was living with another woman, and

Helena had a seven-month-old daughter, Jessica. Soon after they began dating, Roberta moved into Helena's home, and Roberta became Jessica's primary caregiver while Helena worked. Early in their relationship, Helena decided to become a *garota do programa* (sex worker), and even though Roberta was not comfortable with Helena's decision, she was not judgmental and stated that this work afforded Helena the opportunity to "have a good life." For nearly five years, they were a couple, and during this period Roberta cared for Jessica and worried about Helena every time she met clients at motels. Despite the collaborative aspects of Roberta's and Helena's relationship, they had verbal and physical fights because Helena had sexual relations with men other than her male clients. Roberta was angry and felt betrayed that Helena lied about these encounters, and physical fights sometimes ensued. I asked Roberta who typically initiated physical fights and why they had them, and she responded: "Because of her mouth. I would get on her because of her mouth . . . because of jealousy. She lied, and I discovered this." Finally, Roberta no longer wanted to be with Helena because of Helena's sexual betrayals, drinking problem, and heavy marijuana use. While they separated as couple because Roberta felt that Helena did not have control over her life, Roberta continued to live with Helena and essentially worked as Jessica's live-in nanny. Roberta only moved out of Helena's home and no longer took care of Jessica when Helena became seriously involved with a man she met while working as an exotic dancer. Before moving out, Roberta spoke with him and asked him to take care of Helena and Jessica. He reassured her that he would. Roberta's experiences both reinforced and dismantled stereotypes about *bofe* women because she was the "masculine" partner who physically abused her female lover, and she was also the traditional "feminine" caregiver in the household. Within Brazilian culture, and in many other societies, women who comport themselves as men are conceived of as the dominant partner inside and outside the bedroom. One aspect of their dominance is their supposed use of violence. In Salvador, *bofes* are said to be very physically aggressive because they need to establish their manhood and have more to prove than the average man. Consequently, from a masculinist perspective, Roberta's violent actions were her attempts to "control" Helena because she had emasculated her through both her sex work and her other extrarelational sexual activities with men. On the other hand, Roberta's actions can be understood as an angry outgrowth of her status as the homemaker and primary caregiver for Helena's daughter, Jessica. For almost five years, Roberta *mothered* Jessica while Helena worked and *played* as she pleased. Thus simply attributing Roberta's behavior to her masculine tendencies elides the complexity of both her situation and her masculine identity.

Toms and Dees in Thailand

Roberta's *bofe* masculine identity is similar to, but not the same as, *tom* identity in Thailand. In Megan Sinnott's ethnography *Toms and Dees*, she states that same-sex relationships between women in Thailand typically comprise a *tom* and *dee* paring: *toms* are the masculine partners and *dees* are the feminine. Even though there is no clear *dee* identity, *toms* are gendered as women who embody female masculinity (2004:39, 82). Despite their gendered role as the masculine partners in relationships, Sinnott asserts that *toms* also inhabit the stereotypically defined Thai "feminine" role as the caregiver to their *dee* partners. *Toms* provide not only for *dees'* financial needs, a behavior considered manly, but also for their emotional and sexual needs as well, which is considered a woman's duty (2004:90–92). Accordingly, I suggest that Roberta also occupied an interstitial space between traditional masculine and feminine gender poles in Brazilian society. Similar to *toms*, *bofes* are the more responsible sexual partner in that it is their duty to bring their female partner to orgasm, regardless of the degree to which a *bofe* accepts corporal stimulation from her partner. I am not suggesting that there is a one-to-one correlation between the Thai *tom* and the Brazilian *bofe*. I do suggest, however, that *bofes*, like *toms*, can occupy a less "traditional" masculine role in their relationships with more "feminine" women. Therefore, it is too simplistic to maintain, categorically, that the violence perpetrated by *bofes* is merely a sign of their butch identity. In essence, I seek to dismantle the notion that violence in lesbian relationships is primarily the by-product of masculine mimicry.

Violent Femmes

Nala

Even if *bofes* were violent toward their girlfriends because it bolstered their masculine authenticity and authority, it was abundantly clear that in many relationships where violence was present, neither woman was considerably more "masculine" than her partner. Nala was one example of this phenomenon. Nala was a thirty-eight-year-old light brown–skinned woman who self-identified as black even though many people in Brazilian society would have characterized her as *parda* because of her hair and the lightness of her skin tone. Despite the fact that Nala had short, curly hair and did not wear makeup, no one would consider her a *bofe* because she wore skirts and other feminine clothing. She was typically attracted to women who were very "feminine" with dark skin and long hair. When I first met Nala at her home, she was initially hesitant to talk with me because she did not "assume" a lesbian identity in her community at-large, and she had never spoken with her parents about her female lovers. For Nala, her professional and personal worlds were clearly divided, and there was a further divide between her romantic and family lives. During our first meeting, she

nonetheless agreed to do an interview with me, and I returned the next week. Sensing her hesitation, I decided to begin the interview with questions about racism and sexism in the city of Salvador because I wanted her to feel comfortable with the prospect of speaking with me. After discussing these topics, I segued into asking her about her personal life, inquiring about her romantic history with both women and men. She had recently separated from her girlfriend of nine years and had begun a new relationship with a woman who had never been in a sexual relationship with another woman. Nala answered my questions and engaged in a conversation with me, but it was only after I turned off the digital recorder that she seemed to relax. I talked about myself and my relationship with my then-girlfriend now-wife, Tracy. When I proceeded to ask Nala more questions about her ex-girlfriend of nine years, she seemed to be feeling more comfortable and open, and it was then that Nala told me about her girlfriend's physical assault of her. Toward the end of their relationship, Nala's ex-girlfriend found out that Nala had sex with another woman in their home. Enraged, she violently attacked Nala, throwing cups at her and burning her with a cigarette. Nala showed me a visible scar on her thigh, one among other scars that remained on her body from that fight. Her ex-girlfriend was decidedly more feminine than she was, and this incident was the first among several Nala experienced with some of her femme partners. I observed this pattern because Nala and I became friends during my years of traveling to Salvador, and her girlfriend in 2008 also had a problem with jealousy and physical aggression toward Nala. In early 2008, Nala began dating Gisele, who like her previous long-term girlfriend, was dark-skinned with long, dark, straight hair. During our interactions, we talked about a variety of topics, and on one of these occasions, Nala discussed her relationship with Gisele. I described the conversation as follows in my field notes:

> Gisele was a very jealous girlfriend, according to Nala, and she did not like the fact that Nala went to bars and socialized at nighttime with friends. Gisele preferred that Nala stay at home. She often called Nala during the day and inquired about her location and activities. When they were together, she did not like other women looking at Nala, and she would become upset if she thought Nala was flirting with someone. According to Nala, she would become "aggressive" sometimes. Once, when she received a text message from a previous girlfriend, Gisele became very angry and threw things in her apartment and pinched Nala's arm. This occurred a month into their relationship. And this was not the last time that Gisele has pinched Nala's arm out of anger. Nala told Gisele that she did not like it when Gisele pinched her, and although Gisele said she would not do it again, she never apologized for her actions. I asked Nala if she thought Gisele would pinch her again, and she said yes. Nala also believed Gisele when Gisele said that she would kill Nala if she ever cheated on her. I asked Nala if she was afraid, and

she said that she was not afraid of Gisele or anyone else. She finally stated that her friends wanted her to separate from Gisele. (field note, April 1, 2008)

Nala and Gisele are an example of a lesbian relationship in which neither party self-identified or would have been perceived as a masculine woman, nonetheless, aggressive behavior was still present. In my field notes, I noted that Nala specifically used the word "aggressive" to characterize some of Gisele's behavior toward her. While pinching your lover's arm is not the most violent act, for Nala, it still was an act of aggression. Despite the caution and worry expressed by Nala's friend and me, Nala seemed almost resigned to the fact that Gisele would continue to pinch because of Gisele's jealous nature. Again, in both this relationship and Nala's previous long-term relationship, her more femme partners were physically aggressive toward her. While there were distinct differences between the levels of violence that were perpetrated against Nala by her previous and present girlfriend, it was evident that each woman expressed her jealousy and anger through physical aggression.

Lesbian Activism and Intimate Partner Violence

Similar to the difficulty of using race, class, education, and gender roles as dependable predictors of the presence of violence in a lesbian relationship, the level of a woman's social consciousness or self-awareness was not a reliable indicator either. As I stated in the Introduction, of the thirty-eight women that I interviewed who either self-identified as lesbian, *entendida*, or who had engaged in a sexual relationship with another woman, eighteen were involved in social movements to varying degrees. Fifteen women were involved in the feminist, black feminist, and/or lesbian, gay, bisexual, *travestis*, transgender, and transsexual (LGBT) movements in Salvador and three were mainly involved in the black movement in the city. These women had disparate levels of involvement in movement life, ranging from leadership roles to infrequent participation and attendance at group meetings. I decided to broadly identify women as activists if they had participated in several LGBT, feminist, and/or black movement events as an organizer or volunteer. Of the eighteen women who were activists of some kind in Salvador, eleven had been involved in at least one violent encounter in a relationship with another woman, and their experiences varied from minor encounters involving a scuffle, pushing, and/or a face slap to violent confrontations that left physical scars. From the information at my disposal—including information gained from informal interviews, socializing with these women, and conversations with their friends—many of the women were not the physically aggressive partner in a confrontation. Some women were the aggressors, however, as two had pushed or slapped their female partners at least once, and

another two women had assaulted their past girlfriends on several occasions. Finally, of the eleven women, only a few had experienced violence before they became involved in a social movement, and for a majority of the women, their encounters with violence occurred after they began their movement activities.

Patrícia[2]

Patrícia was one of the women I interviewed who was a perpetrator and victim of IPV in past relationships. She was in her midtwenties and had been involved in the lesbian movement in Salvador for several years. She lived with her girlfriend in an apartment and had gotten a job with the state government when she was twenty-one years old, a fact that allowed her financial stability and a flexible schedule. On several occasions, we met to discuss the LGBT movement in Salvador and its relationship with the black movement. The last time we met in August 2009, I concluded an interview that I began with her in March 2008. Unlike in the interviews I conducted with other women, I discussed with Patrícia some of my observations about the LGBT organizations in Salvador, and I specifically asked her opinion about violence in lesbian relationships: the frequency of violence, the reasons behind violent reactions, class and gender divides, and so on. I was admittedly surprised when Patrícia told me that she had been in violent relationships and had perpetrated violence against a past girlfriend. I have provided a significant portion of our interview that discussed this topic because Patrícia's perspective about her actions and the role of cultural norms is revealing.

> PATRÍCIA: I think that lesbians are not different from other people in society and the models that are followed. Because society is sexist. Whoever is the man, he will be in charge. A man is permitted to treat a woman like property. In heterosexual relationships, this is evident. When you are looking at lesbian relationships, people try to fit into this type of model. You have two women, but you will still have this sexist model. Lesbians reproduce this model. So, one will have more power like the man. She will pay the bills, pay for the house. . . . I also reproduced these models. I am a person within society. The difference is that now I am able to evaluate, contemplate my practices. In my experiences with other women that I lived with, besides physical aggression, there were other types of verbal violence as well. Cursing and making the other person feel inferior, putting them down like they have less worth. I had a relationship where there was verbal violence and even physical violence, fighting. This was because of betrayal. I beat my companion in our house, and I was also assaulted as well. This made me reevaluate my ways. Now I think about this model, and I prefer dialogue. I don't want to be impulsive anymore. Now I call for us to have a dialogue, to talk. I accept criticisms from my companion when she has questions. I am a very authoritative person with

my companion. So then when she has had enough, we talk about this. I recognize that I am this way, and I don't want to be like this. So I am reevaluating, but everyone is a victim of the structures in society. This structure in society becomes the culture in society. So we need to deconstruct this cultural model.

ANDREA: I see what you are saying, but I don't know if I agree because a lot of the time, people say that the *bofe* or the more masculine woman is the aggressor in the relationship. But in my experience, she was not the aggressor all the time. I think people have this idea that the *bofe* is more aggressive, especially among the popular classes, and that [violence] only happens in other neighborhoods with other classes.

PATRÍCIA: I believe that it happens in every class, but the majority of it is in the popular class. I would say that this model of the more masculine, the more aggressive is because this model was constructed by men. But I know cases of couples where one is *bofe* and the other is more feminine and it is the more feminine one who hits the other.

ANDREA: Most of the time, what do you think are the causes of violence between women . . . betrayal?

PATRÍCIA: Betrayal brings violence, financial problems also, problems at work, like the same reasons that cause violence in heterosexual relationships. One person considers the other person their property. This happens a lot in our culture.

ANDREA: In your relationships, were you sometimes the aggressor?

PATRÍCIA: I've been the aggressor, and I have been assaulted. I was the aggressor, and my girlfriend did not want to stay in the model that she was my property. She didn't want me to control her. I wanted to know where she was going, why she would be late. She did not allow this, me to dominate her like that, and so I assaulted her. I have been assaulted because of betrayal. I was assaulted because of my involvement with the movement, when I began to be more visible in the movement and the other person did not want to be visible in the movement.

ANDREA: Was she an activist?

PATRÍCIA: Yes, she is an activist. She would verbally abuse me, talk about my family, and tell me she was going to kill me. And she is a feminist.

ANDREA: What do you think you were thinking when you were being aggressive?

PATRÍCIA: When I was the aggressor, it's like I said, the other did not agree with this model that I wanted of me controlling her, of being my property. I did not succeed in getting greater control over her. And I also had the economic power. I paid the rent for our apartment. I paid all the bills. So I thought she should do what I wanted. This was the logic in my mind. So I would beat her, verbal aggression and physical aggression. And she would defend herself, with verbal aggression and physical, too. During this time it was very bad for the both of us. I did not feel comfortable with this aggression because after the violence, there were implications for the relationship and its structure. I would feel guilty. It was a horrible sensation, very bad

for me and for her . . . When I began to work in the movement, I began to reevaluate things.

ANDREA: In general, is it bad to have physical violence in relationships?

PATRÍCIA: If it is normal?

ANDREA: Yes.

PATRÍCIA: I think it has come to be naturalized as normal. Some people think it is normal. I don't want to think that it is ever.

ANDREA: Do you think this is a subject that the lesbian movement needs to deal with?

PATRÍCIA: It needs to.

ANDREA: Do you think that some people are maybe hesitant to talk about this because of stereotypes about lesbians as *bofes* and aggressive.

PATRÍCIA: I think that at the national lesbian meetings, the central question is about constructing a different model of society. The ideal society is without homophobia, racism, without *machismo*. And people talk about education and health, but we need to talk about this, too, because when we are reproducing violence, we are reproducing society. Also, the way we are talking about producing another society, we need to talk about violence between lesbians. What causes it? We need to discover and discuss the *machismo* that we are reproducing because the majority of the lesbians I know say that they are feminists, but they have not been producing a feminism of solidarity of worrying about the other. I don't see the solidarity, which is one of the principles of feminism. A lot of them say they are feminists, but we need to think about how feminism is a part of us. As a lesbian feminist, how do I promote and for what am I promoting feminism? I need to demonstrate and promote feminism within my home with my companion through dialogue, with my whole family, with other activists.

Patrícia's experiences exemplified the strong influence of Brazilian heteronormative standards on both men and women in Brazilian society. Even though she was a college-educated woman and an activist, she still succumbed to dominant cultural gender norms. Patrícia, who was not particularly "masculine" in her dress or comportment, was the breadwinner in her family, and this role provided an avenue for her to simulate *specific* Brazilian heterosexual relationship patterns in which control in the relationship was imposed through financial prowess and at times physical force. Patrícia's experiences indicate that the masculinization of violence only partially explains the presence of IPV in relationships because there are other dynamics involved that are inextricably linked with broader cultural norms. Her comments are illuminating because before she became an activist, like many other lesbian women in Salvador, her ideas about control, power, and violence were primarily shaped by dominant cultural ideologies. Even after she became an activist, however, Patrícia was continually reconstituted and reembodied through her participation in Brazilian society.

Conclusion

Of all the chapters in this ethnography, this chapter is the most personal in tone because I personally witnessed the before, during, and aftermath of incidents that involved IPV among lesbian women in Salvador. That being so, I have to admit that I find it difficult to be only the "clerk, or the 'keeper,' of the records" (Scheper-Hughes 1992:29), because I was physically present and affected by some of these "key events in the personal lives and in the life history of the parish" (Scheper-Hughes 1992:29). I understand Val Daniel when he writes, "Greater than the challenge that violence in general poses to writing is the one posed by the presence of violence. My task would have been easier had the violence been a thing of the past, a done deed, or if the future and its hopes, in being attended upon by the present, had better survived the latter's relentless and deforming scourge" (1996:107). While Daniel sought to explain the use of violence and torture in Sri Lanka through a Peircean framework, I have sought, quite frankly, a more simplistic route to orient the reader into the world I inhabited in Salvador. Since this "local moral world" is unique unto itself, it is paramount that I not reify my experience as the official or authoritative conduit that fully explains the impact of physical aggression in the lives and on the bodies of the women in this study. For some of these women, the effects of their partners' physical aggression toward them took the form of burn scars, bruised arms, swollen faces, and scratched necks, marks that did not easily heal. For others, some forgot or laughed away the sting from a slap across the face because this behavior was just an example of women's wild and passionate natures. And for other women, the more lasting effect was internal because they continued to feel shame as a perpetrator of IPV. Individually, each woman's story represents a point on a local moral continuum, illuminating converging and diverging cultural notions about the body, passion, pleasure, control, and violence. Collectively, their stories represent and reveal the difficulties that the country of Brazil has with the problem of IPV. Even though lesbian and *entendida* women are ignored by dominant local moral worlds and cultural ideologies, they are not immune to their influence. Patrícia's perpetration of IPV did not occur in a vacuum. While IPV is a very personal experience, it is an intersubjective experience as well. In Brazil, cultural ideologies endorse images of Brazilians as an emotional, passionate, and intense people whose sexuality oozes from their pores. One of the consequences of this oozing is the perception that Brazilians' intense passion can lead to bodily expressions of anger and pain through IPV. In particular, incidents of jealousy and sexual betrayal contribute to the manifestations of these bodily expressions, especially for Brazilian men, whose authority and dominance can be threatened by even the implication that they are not in control of their heterosexual relationships.

Because lesbian and *entendida* women inhabit an interstitial space in Brazilian society, they are able to reject societal mandates for women to suppress their sexual passions in deference to male authority. They are also, however, in the position to perpetuate Brazilian mores that esteem displays of passionate intensity through physical violence.

CHAPTER 5

Intimate Partner Violence, Government Intervention, and Civil Society

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global phenomenon that traverses the traditional gender/sex divide: men beat women, women beat men, men beat men, and women beat women. At some point in a society's history, it must grapple with the private and public ramifications of domestic abuse cases. How a society attempts to address the occurrence of violence in the home can be revealing. Although lesbian and *entendida* women account for only a small segment of the Brazilian population, their experiences with IPV have broader implications. The same cultural principles and mores that have influenced the actions of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador influence the behavior of all Brazilians. Consequently, these unofficial cultural ideologies that involve embodiment, passion, and intensity become epitomized in private and public discourses about IPV. But official discourses (i.e., those of governments) are also revealing. An examination of the Brazilian government's response to IPV demonstrates how the treatment, or rather, nontreatment, of IPV in lesbian relationships is indicative of larger issues concerning lesbian women and Brazilian citizenship. In order to investigate the relationships between state actors, cultural ideologies, and the Brazilian citizenry, I delve into the past and present responses of local, state, and national governments to IPV among heterosexual couples. I begin my analysis of the politics of domestic violence intervention in Brazil with a focus on James Holston's notion of "disjunctive democracy." In Holston's work *Insurgent Citizenship*, he discusses the limits and inequalities evident in the Brazilian political structure—its disjunctive democracy. He argues that the consequences of this "disjunctive democracy" include the proliferation of everyday violence, the destabilization of cultural norms, and an inegalitarian distribution of rights. The consequences of Brazil's disjunctive democracy have unsurprisingly had a great impact on the response of various actors—the state, police, feminists, and individual women and men—to IPV. Guided by

Holston's concept, I address these issues related to domestic violence intervention through an analysis of the Brazilian government's response to IPV on both local and national levels and, more specifically, the creation of *delegacias de mulher* (women's police stations [WPS]) and the federal laws concerning domestic violence, including Law 9099/95 and the Maria da Penha Law. I return to the local context and focus on IPV in Salvador and examine Sarah Hautzinger's compelling ethnography, *Violence in the City of Women*, which describes women and men's experiences with violence in one community in Salvador and also details the inner-workings of the city's first women's police station. Using Hautzinger's ethnography, I demonstrate how Salvador's WPSs have both disrupted and reinforced gender norms among the women and men who have sought redress at its doors. Lastly, I consider the implications of the interviews that I conducted with police officials and support staff at the two WPSs in Salvador for lesbian women who are victims and/or perpetrators of IPV.

Insurgent Citizenship

As I mentioned in the first chapter, the reign of the military dictatorship in Brazil ended in 1985 with the election of José Sarney. Despite Brazil's return to its democratic roots, James Holston writes that "new kinds of violence, injustice, corruption, and impunity have increased dramatically. This coincidence is the perverse paradox of Brazil's democratization" (2008:273). While ordinary Brazilians were freed from a repressive military regime, they also entered into a new democratic era that produced more instability, unease, and insecurity in their daily lives. In *Insurgent Citizenship*, Holston posits that this new democratic era has been filled with contradictions and inequalities, in part because democratic governance in Brazil has been implemented through the old system of differentiated citizenship. For Holston, Brazilian citizenship has been simultaneously "universally inclusive in membership and massively inegalitarian in distribution" (2008:7). Unlike the situation for black Americans in the United States, the "Brazilian-ness" of indigenous peoples and descendants of African slaves was never questioned—they were always a part of the Brazilian body politic. Brazilian citizenship, however, did not automatically bestow on every Brazilian the same liberties as certain civil and political rights were conferred based on the race, gender, religion, and class of the Brazilian in question. For example, after the abolition of slavery, "to control political citizenship, they made suffrage direct and voluntary but restricted it to the literate. This restriction denied most Brazilians their political rights for a century, until the 1980s" (2008:67–68). Holston argues that this continuation of differentiated citizenship after the end of military rule in 1985 collided with insurgent forms of citizenship. These insurgent citizenships were the products of poor

and working-class Brazilians' democratization of urban spaces, and together these intersecting and conflicting forms of citizenship produced a "disjunctive democracy" (2008:8–14). While the disjunctive nature of Brazilian democracy is no longer blatantly rooted in gendered, racialized, and class-stratified forms of discrimination, Holston asserts that legislative and judicial processes have effectively been used to disenfranchise certain classes of people, including "the poor, squatters, marginals, migrants, inferiors, communists, strikers, and other others" (2008:19). For example, employees have the right to bring charges against employers, but employers resort to using legal maneuvers and tactics that result in endless postponements of a final verdict. These tactics are quite common in the Brazilian judicial system, ultimately impeding the complete implementation of justice and punishment (2008:285–86). Inequality under the law still reigns in Brazil in the midst of this new democratic era that has destabilized previous social and political boundaries between rich and poor, privileged and oppressed, and criminals and police officers (2008:14, 301–2). Holston contends that insurgent forms of citizenship have arisen from the destabilization of these boundaries, both empowering and disempowering the Brazilian populace. For instance, the urban poor in large cities like São Paulo employ knowledge of the law and civic participation in their attempts to end inequality. They have sought to assert their rights as citizens who deserve the municipal services of their community. Although insurgent citizenship has benefited average citizens, the destabilization of the status quo—along with urbanization and privatization—has led to an increase in urban violence, corruption, and an overall distrust of the government (2008:14, 273).[1] The people most powerless against these deleterious consequences of Brazilian destabilization and disjunctive democracy, particularly the rise in urban violence, have been poor and working-class Brazilians. They cannot flee to the safety of gated communities, secure high-rise condominiums, and private transportation. Urban violence has become a part of the everyday experiences of millions of Brazilians to a much higher degree than was the case during the period of dictatorship. Furthermore, the continued legalization of privileges and the legitimization of inequalities by the Brazilian judicial system constitute forms of social violence that have been experienced by those who have the least amount of clout and connections in Brazilian society. Describing these challenges clearly and persuasively, Holston's examination of democracy in Brazil is useful in understanding how Brazilian society, until very recently, has systematically and socially disenfranchised victims of IPV. The experiences of one victim of IPV in Brazil, Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes, illustrates the ramifications of Holston's contention about Brazil's disjunctive democracy because of her inability to find justice as well as her employment of her rights as a Brazilian citizen to force reforms to Brazil's treatment of IPV.

Maria Da Penha vs. Brazil

In 1983, a thirty-eight year old woman named Maria da Penha, a resident of Fortaleza, Ceará, a biopharmaceutical technician, and mother of three daughters, was shot in the back while she slept. The perpetrator was her husband Marco Antônio Heredia Viveiros, and the shooting was the culmination of years of violent behavior toward Maria da Penha by her husband who was an economist and university professor. Initially, Heredia Viveiros told the police that intruders shot his wife. But two weeks after a paraplegic Maria da Penha returned home from the hospital, Heredia Viveiros tried to electrocute her. Despite the abundance of evidence against Heredia Viveiros, it took eight years for him to be found guilty of assault and attempted murder. He was sentenced to fifteen years in prison in 1991, but his sentence was reduced to ten years in 1996 because he had no prior convictions. Even with these rulings, Heredia Viveiros continued to evade his prison sentence and was still a free man in 1998. After his release and fifteen years after having almost been killed by her own spouse in 1983, Maria da Penha was so frustrated with the Brazilian judicial system that she sought international recourse. Jointly with the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and the Brazilian Chapter of Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM-Brazil), Maria da Penha petitioned the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS). In the case Maria da Penha v. Brazil, she and the other petitioners (the aforementioned organizations) alleged that the Federative Republic of Brazil had condoned the domestic violence perpetrated against Maria da Penha because, "for more than 15 years, it has failed to take the effective measures required to prosecute and punish the aggressor, despite repeated complaints."[2] Three years later—and with no official response from Brazil to the IACHR about Maria da Penha's petition—IACHR found Brazil negligent in its failure to act effectively in Maria da Penha's case. Moreover, the international commission concluded that the country demonstrated a general pattern of inefficacy and tolerance of domestic and family violence against women. IACHR issued recommendations in regard to Maria da Penha's case and called for reforms to Brazilian governmental responses to IPV against women. Even in light of this international rebuke—and an admonishment from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2003—the Brazilian government did not take immediate action, attempt any legislative reform, or implement any cohesive social remedies in response to the IACHR recommendations until 2006 (Roure 2009:91–92).

Women's Police Stations and Legal Maneuvers

In Brazil's defense, the country had made earlier attempts to tackle the problem of domestic violence in the mid-1980s with the creation of Delegacias de Polícia de Defesa da Mulher (Police Stations in Defense of Women). Cecília MacDowell Santos's work *Women's Police Stations* (2005) provides both macro- and microlevel descriptions and analyses of the creation and evolution of WPSs. Beginning in the late 1970s, feminist activists began to protest the unfairness of wife-murder trials, and their protests led to organized campaigns that denounced all forms of violence against women. For example, feminist groups known as SOS-Mulher (SOS-Woman) were instrumental in providing "social, psychological, and legal services to female victims of domestic violence" (2005:20). SOS-Mulher groups were founded in major cities throughout the country, and the SOS-Mulher group in São Paulo was part of a grassroots feminist movement that pressured the São Paulo state government to transform the sexist culture of police stations. In 1983, in response to these feminist demands, the newly elected state governor, Franco Montoro, created the State Council on the Feminine Condition (CECF), which was a seventeen-member council comprised of both state and civil society actors. These representatives were "mostly white, middle-class, educated feminists" (2005:8). Intriguingly, it was not the CECF who proposed to the governor the creation of specialized and female-only staffed police stations but the Secretary of Public Security, Michel Temer. His proposal was an acknowledgment that IPV was a major problem in the state and that the current system provided battered women with no safe haven. Despite the government's acknowledgement, they disregarded the recommendations by the CECF, who concluded that major changes needed to occur at *all* police stations, including antisexism training of police officers and the hiring of social workers who would attend to the needs of the female victims at every police station (2005:21–23). Nevertheless, the CECF, SOS-Mulher São Paulo, and other feminist organizations reconciled themselves, despite their misgivings, to this "separatist strategy" of dealing with domestic violence against women (2005:25). Thus in 1985, the first women's police stations opened in the city of São Paulo. The day after the station's inauguration, "five hundred women waited in line to initiate complaints" (2005:22). Soon after the creation of the first WPS, other municipalities in São Paulo and throughout the country created their own WPSs, and one year after the first station's opening, there were five more WPSs in São Paulo and thirty-six in total throughout the country (2005:41). As of 2009, there were 421 WPSs in Brazil, with 125 in the state of São Paulo. Other statistics indicate that as of 2007, WPSs could be found in 13 percent of the municipalities in the southeast region of Brazil but in only 3 percent of the municipalities in the northeast (Roure 2009:85), and a preponderance of these northeastern WPSs were in state capitals and large cities (Santos 2005:41).

Law 9099/95

Although Brazil had created WPSs, the laws that governed these institutions helped, in effect, to impede women's ability to seek justice and redress through official channels. A close look at another Brazilian policy that was enacted ten years after the first creation of a women's police station sheds light on the ways in which Brazilian society has failed battered women despite its attempts to the contrary. Law 9099/95 could be understood as the Brazilian government's response to feminist activists' critiques about WPSs. This 1995 law addressed most types of domestic abuse cases, provided guidelines for punishing aggressors, and created special civil courts to deal with familial and domestic issues, including domestic violence (Roure 2009:78–79). Law 9099/95 was an attempt by the Brazilian government to improve on their response to IPV cases. Unfortunately, many important features of this law proved to be inadequate, and at times detrimental, in its attempt to address women's concerns and interests. The law only considered domestic violence crimes penal misdemeanors for which the maximum punishment typically could not exceed one year. The special civil courts specifically created to deal with these cases were overloaded, construed legal decisions narrowly, and provided a weak and ineffectual mediation process. Also, complainants could easily be intimidated into retracting their claims or settling their cases through mediation—a process rife with disadvantages and complications for victims. In addition, victims were not afforded legal representation in mediation proceedings while the aggressors were often represented by private attorneys. Finally, permissible punishments under Law 9.099/95 included the "donation of food baskets to charity or the payment of fines" (Roure 2009:79–80, 88, 94–95). Again, in a case similar to that of the development of women's police stations in Brazil, the creation and execution of Law 9099/95 revealed much about Brazilian social and cultural conceptions of IPV.

Based on this abbreviated history of women's police stations and Law 9099/95, imagine the following scenario: In 2004, Carla, a battered woman, lives on the outskirts of Salvador and is fortunate to reside in one of the few northeastern cities that has a women's police station. Carla has been slapped and punched by her husband numerous times over the past two years of their marriage. One day, she decides that she has had enough and travels an hour and a half by bus to file a complaint at the women's police station in Salvador. Despite discouragement from the female police officers at the station who are dismissive of her claims because she has no visible bruises, Carla files a complaint against her husband for assault and battery. Before Carla appears before a judge in the special civil court that deals with domestic violence cases, she and her husband/ aggressor have a meeting with a mediator. He has retained a lawyer who is present for the proceedings, while Carla has no representation because she cannot

afford an attorney. Unfortunately, the state agency that provides legal services to complainants only has two attorneys on staff, and neither is available to take her case. Sitting right next to her husband, Carla ignores him when he nudges her and nonverbally tries to convince her to drop her case. Resilient and resolute, Carla is not satisfied with the mediator's resolution; her case goes before a judge. Carla, without an attorney, pleads her case to the judge and listens to the rebuttal by her husband's lawyer. Finally, after experiencing discouragement at every official level, Carla is at the end of her journey in the legal system. The judge states his verdict: Carla's husband is sentenced to giving a food basket donation to a local charity.

The scenario just described could easily have occurred under Law 9099/95 (Roure 2009:80–81). The very mechanisms—WPSs and Law 9099/95—created to empower women as Brazilian citizens were tools employed to manipulate, cajole, intimidate, and ultimately disenfranchise them in their attempts to seek redress as battered victims. Consequently, Maria da Penha's case against Brazil in the IACHR was momentous even though she eventually waited nineteen years for the final conclusion of her ex-husband's attempted murder and assault case against her. In 2002, her ex-husband's sentence of ten years in prison was upheld and he was finally imprisoned; after two years of imprisonment, however, he was released on parole/probation. While Maria da Penha was able to obtain a small amount of justice, Brazilian women had to wait another four years until comprehensive IPV legal reform was codified and signed into law. In 2006, Law 11340/2006, or as it is commonly known, the Maria da Penha Law, ushered in a new era because it was the first federal criminal law against IPV in the history of Brazil (Roure 2009:69). The Maria da Penha Law "provides for Courts on Domestic and Family Violence Against Women. Among its more significant procedural reforms were changes to the Penal Code, the Law of Criminal Sentences (Lei de Execução Penal), and the Code of Criminal Procedure, all of which had been insufficient and ineffective in protecting victims. This law also changed how domestic violence cases were handled by JECrim" (Roure 2009:92). In addition, two penalties permissible under Law 9099/95 were no longer satisfactory punishments for domestic violence offenders under the Maria da Penha Law: donating a food basket to a charity and paying a fine (Roure 2009:95). Overall, the Maria da Penha Law established a more streamlined system for dealing with the criminal, social, economic, and logistical concerns that could arise in domestic violence cases. From a legal standpoint, Brazil has made significant reforms and has successfully incorporated international human rights discourse about violence against women into its juridical system and legal framework. More Brazilian women reported incidents of domestic violence under the Maria da Penha Law than they had in previous years. However, throughout Brazil, local and state governments' ability to act effectively

on women's behalf is still inadequate and neglects to meet the needs of battered women daily. The implementation of polices under the Maria da Penha Law has also been less successful than it could be because insufficient funding and a lack of resources plague many local and state government initiatives. For instance, the state of Pernambuco had nine million inhabitants and only four women's police stations and two battered women's shelters as of 2010 (Osava 2010).

From a political standpoint, governmental inadequacy, bureaucratic obstacles, and a culture that devalues women's experiences as assault victims appear to represent features of what James Holston has described as a disjunctive democratic process in Brazil. For example, the emerging feminist demands clashed with the patriarchal power of governmentality, thereby exemplifying the destabilization of societal norms. Maria da Penha's attempted murder case was ensnarled in the judicial system for almost twenty years because of appeals and other legal maneuvers. Until the passage of the Maria da Penha Law in 2006, the special courts for domestic abuse cases favored defendants (e.g., charitable donation as a form of punishment). Despite Brazilian women's right to bring charges against their abusers, their right to have a state attorney present in the proceedings was impeded because state agencies were usually overburdened and underfunded. While the systematic disenfranchisement of women in Brazil has lessened over the years, the disjunctive nature of Brazilian democracy has enabled, to some extent, a continuation of a power structure that favors the elite, men, and white Brazilians. Throughout this section, I have focused on IPV and government intervention from a national perspective. In the next section, I will consider the local perspective with a focus on the response, or silence, of city and state agencies to IPV cases in Salvador.

Salvador and Everyday Violence

When considering violence in Salvador, I am always struck by one fact: the vast majority of poor and working-class *soteropolitanos* I know have experienced "everyday violence" in the city. I have friends and know other women and men who have been robbed, burglarized, physically assaulted, and even been a victim of a bus hijacking at rush hour—during daylight hours—in Salvador. I share this observation not to disparage the city of Salvador or intimate that it is more violent than any other metropolitan area in Brazil, which is indicated by the fact that Salvador was not one of the five state capitals with the highest rates of homicide in 2007.[3] In addition, many of the people I have encountered were only victims of petty theft and did not sustain any bodily injuries. Most of the middle- and upper-middle-class women that I knew did not discuss incidents of criminal acts perpetrated against them, excluding two women who told me that they were victims of a carjacking. Nevertheless, I would hypothesize that the

middle- and upper-middle-class women I knew had experienced fewer problems with crime because almost all of them owned or rented a private vehicle, and the vast majority of them lived in middle and upper-middle-class neighborhoods. Furthermore, I would argue that the lack of discussion about their personal experiences with crime was probably an indication that while awareness and safety were obviously priorities for middle-class women—as they were for every *soteropolitano*—their socioeconomic status afforded them some protection. For example, even those women who had been victims of a crime were victims of a "middle-class" crime like carjacking. Cars are very expensive to buy and maintain in Brazil in comparison with other countries, including India, Germany, Japan, the United States, Mexico, and China (Ayres 2010). Beyond these anecdotal examples, statistics confirm that various forms of violence are a part of the daily lives of *soteropolitanos*. A study from 2002 to 2003 provides an illuminating snapshot of the city (Noronha et al. 2008). The study included 705 participants (60 percent were women and 40 percent were men between the ages of 18 and 70) from 47 neighborhoods in Salvador. Demographically, 83.3 percent of the participants self-identified as black, 12.8 percent as white, and 1.8 percent as indigenous; 43.7 percent of the participants had completed elementary school, 40 percent had completed high school, and 12.5 percent were in college or had completed their university studies. Overall, 37.3 percent of the participants indicated that they were not employed at the time of the interview (Noronha et al. 2008:50–51). I have provided this abbreviated demographic profile of the study participants in order to demonstrate that the study included *soteropolitanos* from various socioeconomic, educational, and racial backgrounds, accurately reflecting the population of Salvador. Accordingly, the typical resident of Salvador is black, with some high school education. In the twelve months previous to their participation in the study, 14.8 percent of the interviewees had been assaulted or robbed. During the same time period, 21.8 percent of the participants were present, but not the victim, of an assault or robbery (Noronha et al. 2008:52–53). Since the parameters of this study excluded incidents more than a year old, it is not difficult to believe that most people I knew in Salvador had been victims of assault and robbery at least once in their lifetime. Physical forms of violence are also a concern for *soteropolitanos*: 14.9 percent of participants have been present during the physical assault of a third party, and 15.3 percent have had relatives who were victims of homicides in their lifetime (Noronha et al. 2008:54). Witnessing violence and/or having violence personally affect one's life is a reality for many residents of Salvador. Other statistics that focus on a participant's overall experiences with everyday violence are equally compelling: the rates of car theft and bicycle theft among the participants (14.2 percent and 14.8 percent, respectively) indicate that any resident of Salvador, whether middle/upper-middle or working class, should

have concerns about theft of their private transportation if they possess a vehicle, even a bicycle (Noronha et al. 2008:53). While these crimes are supposedly perpetrated by criminals and "marginals" in society, participants also have to be weary of the state—12.3 percent of the participants state that they had suffered mistreatment at the hands of civil or military police officers, and nearly 10 percent of the participants had to bribe public officials in order to receive some sort of state or municipal service. Within the private sector, participants are also victimized as 17.1 percent of them have been victims of business scams (Noronha et al. 2008:52–53). In terms of overall safety, 88.9 percent of participants feel unsafe on public transportation, and 86.2 percent feel unsafe on city streets and in public squares (Noronha et al. 2008:55). Considering that the vast majority of people do not have private vehicles at their disposal and must walk the streets of Salvador, these statistics indicate that concerns for safety are ever present in the minds of *soteropolitanos.*

Within the home, on the streets, in commercial spaces, and in government buildings, the people of Salvador must constantly be vigilant because physical, social, and psychological violence are omnipresent in the city. Of course, not all residents have a heightened sense of fear in their own homes or when they are in public spaces. Socioeconomic status, race, gender, neighborhood, mode of transportation, and occupation all are factors that influence people's levels of fear and feelings of safety. However, because the average *soteropolitano* is black, working-class, lives in a *popular* neighborhood, and takes the bus, it would not be an exaggeration to state that experiences with multiple forms of everyday violence shape their behavior and attitudes, which has led to complacency, distrust, and an acceptance of the status quo. Furthermore, women, especially poor Afro-Brazilian women, are particularly vulnerable in the city to experiencing everyday violence because they are at the bottom of the racial/socioeconomic/gender hierarchy. Moreover, when sexuality is added to the "oppression equation," black, poor lesbian women find themselves with even fewer options than heterosexual women. This was the environment for the women in my study, many of whom were working-class/poor black women, and this environment influenced their responses to IPV in their relationships with other women. Of the thirty-eight women I formally interviewed, none had visited a WPS. The only woman who mentioned the involvement of the police in her romantic affairs was my housemate Zita, whose ex-girlfriend filed a complaint against her at their local police station and not at the woman's police station in Salvador. In addition, I only heard one second-hand story about a lesbian seeking the services of the WPS, and she was rebuffed and told that they did not deal with IPV cases between women. Structurally and realistically, WPSs were heteronormative spaces that both disrupted and reinforced traditional gender dynamics in Brazil. In order to support this contention, I turn to look to Sarah

Hautzinger's ethnography *Violence in the City of Women*, which explores the experiences of women, men, and women police officers in relation to IPV and women's police stations. I conclude with a discussion of ethnographic data that I gathered in Salvador at the main WPS in the central neighborhood of Brotas in 2008 and 2013 and the smaller WPS in the outer neighborhood of Periperi in 2013. Together, Hautzinger's book and my research elucidate the advantages and disadvantages of specific governmental responses to IPV for heterosexual, lesbian, and *entendida* women.

Violence in the City of Women

In *Violence in the City of Women*, Sarah Hautzinger skillfully describes the research she conducted at the women's police station in Brotas with women police officers, women complainants, accused men, and community members in a popular neighborhood where she had lived in the early 1990s (2007:5). With the assistance of six student researchers, Hautzinger employed several techniques in her quest to acquire data about IPV in Salvador; these included questionnaires, interviews, informal conversations, attendance at the lodging of complaints and depositions at the WPS, household surveys, and focus groups consisting of women and men, separately (2007:5–6). Similar to Cecília Mac-Dowell Santos's discussion of WPSs in São Paulo, Hautzinger emphasizes the contradictory philosophies that have influenced the execution of domestic violence intervention in Salvador. These philosophies have left Brazilian women having to grapple with cultural norms that designate them alternately as vulnerable, weak, tempestuous, and hard to control. Like Zita who "took the blood" of her ex-girlfriend Simone, the men described in *Violence in the City of Women* also sought to *lavar a honra com sangue* ("wash honor with blood") or regain their stature and privilege through physical force. Often when Hautzinger spoke to men in informal and formal interviews, conversations, and focus groups, they stated that adultery was the major reason for violence in a relationship; the men thought it dishonorable to be cuckolded by their wife, girlfriend, or even mistress (2007:93–135). Fear of losing control and becoming the passive/submissive partner was at the root of men's preoccupation with their women's fidelity, and so a "zero-sum" power dynamics characterized their relationships with women (2007:124). Socialized within Brazilian cultural frameworks that valorized honor, domination, control, and masculinity, it was understandable that men conceived of power and control through this prism. Although men focused on female adultery, Hautzinger states that the majority of instances of IPV did not in fact involve women's unfaithfulness: "Female adultery supplied a critical key scenario, revealing the place where violence was viewed as most probable, as most readily defensible, and, from men's perspectives, as the situation in which it

would be most *necessary* to avoid descending to the category of *corno* (cuckold)" (2007:112). Focusing on female adultery, it could be theorized, allowed men to not contemplate the role of alcohol and drug use as contributing factors to their perpetration of IPV against their girlfriends and wives (Couto et al. 2007; Dossi et al. 2008; Ludermir et al. 2008; Zaleski et al. 2010).[4] Considering men's attitudes about adultery and its ramifications in their heterosexual relationships, it is not surprising that other perceived threats to their power would also call for aggression. Hautzinger writes, "Thus, not only can a wife's adulterous behavior merit a violent response in defense of honor, but many other aspects of her behavior as well—her words, her movements, her appearance, her commitment to him" (2007:126). The traditional idea that a woman's place was in the home and that a man could freely roam the streets had collided with modern ideals, capitalism, and disjunctive democracy. By working more outside the home, by socializing in public, by learning about their rights, and by attempting to exert more authority in the home, women directly challenged the patriarchal power structure (i.e., their husbands). Because Brazilian men are socialized to be *machistas* whose masculinity is tied to their ability to control their wives' and girlfriends' behavior, they are easily made insecure in their manhood. Hautzinger theories that men's insecurity and shifting power dynamics have led to "contestatory violence" (2007:126–28, 175, 276), which is a different form of IPV than "dominance-driven violence." Chronic violence, severe beatings, and emotional abuse characterize IPV rooted in dominance-driven dynamics, in which the goal is total control and submission. Contestation dynamics characterize IPV that occurs in relationships in which the woman's power is growing or has grown to equal the authority of her husband or boyfriend. Within these relationships, men's violent acts are usually less severe in nature and sporadic, and this form of abuse typically occurs when women attempt to leave. In addition, mutual violence can be a feature of "contestatory violence" as well (2007:174–76). Like men, women employ a variety of reasons to explain their physical aggression toward their husbands, and Hautzinger surmises that in the contestation for power, women act violently as a sign of their own "prowess" and as a form of self-protection (2007:31, 164–68). Violence in Hautzinger's ethnography represented not only evidence of a woman's submissive status but also a response to her changing status.

Women's Voices and Intimate Partner Violence

Violence in the City of Women provides a dynamic framework for understanding IPV in Salvador because it raises important issues surrounding women's emerging power and agency within their relationships with their husbands and boyfriends. Hautzinger's ethnography also reflects how larger cultural and social forces influence individual women's and men's behavior, thereby establishing

IPV as a complex phenomenon encompassing more than a "victim/female versus perpetrator/male" reality (2007:28–35). Finally, Hautzinger provides an objective space in her ethnography for the voices of men to be heard, specifically for those men who have engaged in violent behavior toward their wives and girlfriends. Instead of focusing only on women and their victimization, she also seeks to delve into the mentality of the average *baiano* (Bahian man).[5] Despite the complexity she affords her male interviewees in their discussion about IPV, her description of women's motivations for their engagement in violent behavior is underwhelming (2007:164–66, 172–76). Hautzinger contends that women who act violently toward their male partners are asserting themselves as equal partners in the relationship, hence her term "contestatory violence." Still, it is unclear what exactly the motivations are of women who have physically assaulted their partners. For instance, Hautzinger describes the violent relationship that Janaína, a very poor woman with children, has with her common-law husband, Jorge. On separate occasions, they attacked each other with broken bottles, and it is unclear what precipitated their violent behavior toward each other. Based on Hautzinger's chapter about men and their conceptions of violence, it is possible to extrapolate the multiple reasons that Jorge could employ as rationalizations. For Janaína, on the other hand, her motivations were less clear (2007:164–66). There is also the case of Rosimaria, a woman who filed a complaint against her husband after the first time he beat her even though she had been physically aggressive toward him on "many previous occasions." Hautzinger writes, "For Rosimaria, it was the greater force her husband wielded that made his behavior, and not her own, life-threatening and therefore criminal." She also quotes Rosimaria, who said, "If all women acted like this—seeking out their rights and saying no, no, no!—we would never see women who were beaten by men and accepted it" (2007:172–73). Again, it is important to reiterate that an elision occurs in this passage: Hautzinger notably states Rosimaria's reasons for filing a complaint against her husband, yet she does not delve into Rosimaria's own reasons for her physical aggression toward him. While contestatory violence is on display in Janaína's relationship, it is ambiguous how Hautzinger would categorize the power dynamics in Rosimaria's situation. If "violence presupposes the *intention* to oppress" (2007:174), then the lack of clarifying details about the behavior of Rosimaria and other women who are the aggressors downplays women's power because their behavior is only seen through a reactionary framework.[6] If women are agentive enough to instigate physical aggression as a means of exerting their power, why are they not agentive enough to have other reasons for their violent behavior beyond their attempts to be defensive through offensive behavior? One reason that explains Hautzinger's lack of descriptions of female-to-male violence in Salvador is her analysis and employment of Brazilian discourses of gender and

violence: "For many Brazilian men, violence is also a key resource for the performance of masculinity. Violence need not always be a masculinizing resource: accounts exist where women initiate more violence and such force is associated, culturally, with forms of femininity, but that is generally not the case in Bahia" (2007:33). Categorically, I agree with this assertion because it is evident that violence is conceived of as a "masculinist enterprise" in Brazil, and frankly, throughout most of the world. A woman's worth is usually not associated with how strong or physically imposing she is. Moreover, women's violent behavior toward their husbands and boyfriends is typically less severe than when the reverse situation occurs (Bible, Das Dasgupta, and Osthoff 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Buttell and Carney 2005; Cook and Swan 2006). However, I would argue that Hautzinger underestimates women's propensity for violence when she takes at face value cultural norms that extol women's nonviolent nature. Intriguingly, Hautzinger touches on an alternative perspective in her summary of dominance and contestation dynamics: "Both dynamics are ordered by a 'between slaps and kisses' ideology that sees violence and love as inextricably linked, and naturalized violence by tying it to romance, passion, and jealousy, as well as to models of essential gender difference. Such notions, in turn, support the naturalization of male violence as part of 'normal' masculinity but also lay the groundwork for women's resistance" (2007:47). Hautzinger readily admits that there are connections between passion, jealousy, and violence in Brazilian society even though she de-emphasizes the possibility that both partners have the propensity to be violently passionate with each other, thereby continuing to naturalize violence as a masculinist enterprise.

Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence and Emotionality

At this juncture, a specific discussion of my own research with lesbian women in Salvador provides an *abertura* (opening) for understanding how the *potential* naturalization of violence in an intimate relationship occurs regardless of the gender or sex of the partners. In Chapter 4, I argued that within certain "local moral worlds" in Salvador, acts such as slapping, pushing, or shoving one's lover were not always considered to be "violence." On one extreme, there was my housemate Zita who was severely physically abusive with her ex-girlfriend on numerous occasions because of issues related to jealousy, control, and domination. Even in that case, her ex-girlfriend Simone on a few occasions supposedly had instigated violent confrontations. Their relationship could be described as an example of dominance and contestation dynamics at work because the violence in their relationship was chronic, at times physically dangerous, and at times mutual. Notwithstanding the mutuality of violence in their relationship, there was no question that Zita was considered "the abuser" by the community of her friends and neighbors, myself included. On the other end of the spectrum

were three women whose experiences with singular incidents of mild forms of physical aggression did not seem to rise to the level of *real* violent behavior for them. Instead, they demonstrated the intensity and passions of their emotions on display—"*entre tapas e beijos*" ("between slaps and kisses"). I bring the experiences of lesbian women to the fore in order to demonstrate that a mild degree of physical aggression can be just as easily associated with women as with men. Furthermore, mild forms of violence between women were not looked upon with the same degree of condemnation as that in heterosexual relationships in which the men were the perpetrators. Thus violence was contextualized and even undefined because the gender of both partners and the degree of physical engagement influenced individual and communal conceptions. Accordingly, I would argue that while the "between slaps and kisses" ideology in Brazil has more readily and visibly influenced men's behavior, women also embody this norm. When a woman slaps her boyfriend or husband in the midst of an argument or because she just found out that he cheated on her, is her "violence" a sign of resistance? Or is her violent response a demonstration of the intensity of the emotions that she is feeling in that moment, whether they be feelings of hurt or anger?

Gender, Power, and Women's Police Stations

Any discussion of IPV in Salvador and Brazil must deal not only with the internal power struggles that occur between couples but also with the power struggles that occur when this violence becomes a public matter. The rendering of IPV as a governmental or political issue can be detrimental for women because the problem is being "dealt with" within a masculinist and androcentric structure. Hence it is not surprising that many Brazilian feminists have serious concerns about WPSs, and they question whether or not they are the most appropriate remedy for IPV. First, feminists have considered it an essentialist assumption to presume that female police officers would be more sensitive to the needs of female victims, and they are skeptical of women police officers' level of sensitivity because they have been socialized in a masculinist police culture (Hautzinger 2007; Nobre and Barreira 2008; Ostermann 2003; Santos 2005). Second, feminists have not been convinced that the criminalization of IPV against women should be the primary solution in Brazilian society's attempts to curtail this form of interpersonal violence. They fear that other important factors such as social, economic, and cultural issues are virtually ignored (Santos 2005:30–31; Grossi 2001:96). Third, feminists have criticized the lack of comprehensive training about IPV that both male and female police officers receive in police academy (2005:34, 56). Finally, many WPSs throughout Brazil have been inadequately funded, lacked social workers on staff, and ineffectively investigated

women's complaints. Consequently, the early "unhappy success" of WPSs has not translated into a high or even mediocre rate of investigation and prosecution of aggressors (Roure 2009; Santos 2005; Schraiber et al. 2007). For example, according to census data from 2010, there are approximately 1,200,000 female residents of the city of Salvador who are fifteen and older (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística 2014). Yet when I visited the main WPS in the city in August 2013, I was told that the station only employed seven police officials, four social workers, and two psychologists. Clearly that is not a sufficient number of personnel to adequately serve the needs of women in Salvador who experience IPV. Furthermore, even as Brazilian women have filed hundreds of thousands of complaints every year (Santos 2005:178; d'Oliveira and Schraiber 2005), studies about the efficacy and the use of women's police stations tell a different story. For example, a population-based survey in the city of São Paulo found that "17.6 percent of the women who reported some episode of physical and/or sexual violence had sought help from the ordinary police and 13.7 percent went to the WPD" (d'Oliveira and Schraiber 2005). Another survey in the state of Pernambuco found that of the women interviewed, "10.0 percent went to the ordinary police and 0.5 percent sought out the WPD" (d'Oliveira and Schraiber 2005). It is clear that few women who are victims of domestic violence seek assistance from WPSs, and when they do seek help, the lack of trained counselors, social workers, and the ambiguity of the policewomen's role hinders the efficacy of the WPSs (Hautzinger 2005:207–8). Thus women's police stations have been a mixed blessing for women in Brazil because the continual creation of WPSs signifies that local and state governments recognize that IPV is a problem that needs to be addressed. On the other hand, the presence of WPSs has also provided local and state governments a too-easy response to accusations that they have not taken seriously the issue of domestic violence.

Although women's police stations have had a problematic history in Brazil, one cannot deny that for the women who do utilize the services of the women's police stations in Salvador, *some* of them find relief and are empowered by their self-advocacy. For example, in the past it was more likely that women only sought the services of the WPS after years of chronic abuse, according to the chief *delegadas* (officer, magistrate). In recent years, Hautzinger was told that more women had begun to file complaints, or at least threatened to, after only one incident of spousal abuse. These decisions by women indicate that a small minority of women in Salvador use WPSs as a means to "resist, strategize, and contest" for power in their relationships with their boyfriends and husbands (2007:172–73). Women's ability to seek redress should not be underestimated because throughout most of Brazil's history as a country, women had no real recourse when they were victims of IPV. The redemocratization of Brazil ushered in a new era in which women could find a safe haven and official

recognition that their rights were being violated. In fact, women's police stations emboldened some women because "many of them arrive there not as downtrodden victims but as contestants for power and self-determination. They attempt to use newly available means to prevent themselves from falling into (greater) subjugation at the hands of male partners" (Hautzinger 2007:180). Symbolically, women's police stations, and especially policewomen, could be conceived of as the "Big Sister" who protects all Brazilian women. Policewomen are well-positioned to occupy this role for battered women because, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, there is an overt cultural association of women with nonviolence and/or justified violence while men represent aggression and illegitimate violence (Hautzinger 2007:190–91). Therefore, because of these cultural beliefs about women, it is unsurprising that policewomen would be chosen to staff women's police stations. When a man is ordered to attend a hearing and must demonstrate respect for the authority of the *delegadas*, his girlfriend or wife is able to display her own kind of power in the relationship, and this power is bolstered and supported by the mere existence of women's police stations. Even when policewomen are aggressive toward male suspects, regardless of the legitimacy of their acts, Hautzinger states that the communal focus is on "feminine brutality" and not "police brutality"; the femininity of the police officers supersedes their "police-ness." Thus this seeming power struggle between feminine nonviolence/justified violence and masculine violence/illegitimacy would appear to be a win for women's rights and "women power."

For some women, women's police stations can be spaces that support women's empowerment; however, for many of the other women who seek the services of WPSs, this notion does not completely match reality. Cecília MacDowell Santos's analysis of the "engendering" of policewomen reveals how women's police stations simultaneously uphold patriarchal norms even as they increase women's options. Earlier in the chapter, I focused on Santos's work on the creation of the first WPS and the politics and thinking that influenced their creation and structure. One of the most convincing aspects of Santos's work is her analysis of the ramifications of what she has called a "masculinist police culture" (2005:47). Santos notes that there is conflict between these two opposing expectations: the belief—held both by feminists and nonfeminists—that "engendered" policewomen are natural allies for women versus the reality that "engendered" policewomen are policemen (*machistas*) in feminine form (2005:47–81). Santos, as well as Hautzinger, highlights the tension that exists for policewomen who are socialized in a masculinist police culture even as they are unofficially required to be "counselors, social workers, and sisters" (Hautzinger 2007:197). Because of this socialization, policewomen represent masculine power when they confront men who have been accused of spousal abuse. As representatives of a masculinist police culture, the androcentric aspects of their

authority cannot be dismissed, because in essence, policewomen and the violent men they encounter are in a struggle to be the "active" partner in their relationship with each other. It can be argued that policewomen will always "win" or dominate the accused men, and this appears to be one reason that women seek their services. As such, policewomen and WPSs represent a more expansive and dangerous *machista* or patriarchal power that women, unconsciously and consciously, utilize in order to limit the power of one particular man. Even more influential than a policewoman's gender is her occupation as a representative of a masculinist enterprise: "Policewomen's imperative to use violence or threats of violence to gain power and control directly paralleled the logic of batterers' own use of violence, and stood in stark conflict with an antiviolence stance that construes physical force as illegitimate" (Hautzinger 2007:223). This statement by Hautzinger is insightful because it lays bare the reality of policewomen's power and supports my contention that WPSs and the policewomen themselves have become a form of masculine power at women's disposal. Alongside the lack of funding and staff for WPSs in Salvador (Hautzinger 2007:217), policewomen wield masculinist power that benefits as well as limits women's capacity to act of their own volition. WPSs and the Maria da Penha Law can be construed as official measures that attempt to, as Sally Engle Merry argues, unsettle "hegemonic categories of gender inequality" (1995:53). However, this disruption does not necessarily dislodge or replace hegemonic structures with more egalitarian systems. Merry's depiction of violence control programs exemplifies this reality: "Batterers' programs represent the emergence of a new disciplinary system for working-class and poor men promoting a middle-class understanding of the relationship between violence and social ties. The protection of women becomes the rationale for mechanisms which control subordinated men" (1995:68). When abused and battered women use the masculinist power of WPSs, they must inevitably contend with the advantages and disadvantages of this decision as they encounter *machista* conceptions that influence the behavior of policewomen. Of course, not all policewomen in Salvador or in Brazil are *machistas* or have incorporated the same levels of *machismo* into their dealings with women. However, the threat of violence and intimidation that policewomen can inflict upon accused wife-beaters is counterbalanced by traditional cultural (masculinist) norms that privilege men over women. Consequently, policewomen heavily encourage reconciliation between heterosexual spouses even if this encouragement essentially downplays the physical assaults that were experienced by women. This can be a drawback for women because an emphasis on reconciliation, above all else, can revictimize women and delegitimize their claims, especially when the men are the breadwinners of the family and not *marginal* abusers (Hautzinger 2007:196–97, 232; Santos 2005:123–25). The police are trained to uphold the privilege and status of the *pai da família* (father-husband)

(Hautzinger 2007:232; Santos 2005:149), thereby linking policewomen with a patriarchal apparatus that values, on the whole, the interests and needs of men. Despite these critiques of WPSs, it is important to reiterate that WPSs have served an important function for women who have been physically assaulted by their boyfriends or husbands. Considering Brazil's history with "crimes of passion" and the impunity given for wife-beaters, the existence of WPSs is valuable and an advancement for women. Hautzinger notes that between 1985 and 2004, over four million women sought the services of a women's police station in Brazil, and in Salvador thousands of women registered complaints at the local WPS (2007:137, 200). Additionally, Hautzinger posits that WPSs signify women's emergence as a "citizen's constituency" in a democratic Brazil, representing important cultural and social shifts in the nation (2007:265). As Brazilian women have emerged as a bloc of citizens, it is unclear who is included or excluded in this bloc: are lesbian and *entendida* women accepted as Brazilian citizens?

Women's Police Stations in Salvador, 2008 and 2013

In October 2008, I had the opportunity to interview one of the *delegadas* at the WPS in Brotas, Salvador. In one of her statements to me, she confirmed that complaints could not be filed against women: "Here, we do not register complaints against women . . . now, in some cases where a woman arrives and tries to register a complaint . . . 'Ah my husband beat me,' and then we observe that she reciprocates, we do not register his complaint against her." The *delegada* noted that it was "very rare" to receive complaints about women by men and surmised that the lack of men's outreach to women's police stations raised important cultural, social, and policy-based questions. If a man wanted to file a complaint against his wife or girlfriend, he would have to visit his neighborhood police station, which was probably ill-equipped to handle IPV cases. I was told that the *delegadas* would send lesbian women to their neighborhood police stations if they had visited the WPS to file a complaint. Owing to the infrequency of cases involving lesbian women, the *delegada* seemed to be speaking more theoretically than in terms of her experience. She bluntly stated, "Here in the *delegacia*, no, no, we do not file complaints involving homoaffective relationships." It was revealing that the *delegada* used the phrase *relações homoafétivas* (homoaffective relationships) because it is a phrase that has only recently become a part of the jargon of scholars, activists, and now government officials about same-sex sexuality in Brazil. In this instance, her invocation of this phrase appeared to emphasize the sexual "identity" of lesbian women over their gender status, thereby nullifying their femininity.

Five years later, I returned to the WPS in Brotas because I wanted to ascertain if the same policies were in place in regards to the treatment of lesbian victims

of IPV. I conducted interviews with three *delegadas*, one psychologist, and one social worker, all of whom were women. In addition, I interviewed a *delegada* at the smaller WPS in Peripe14, an outer neighborhood of the sprawling city of Salvador. Fascinatingly, everyone contradicted the *delegada* who spoke with me in 2008, and they stated that lesbian women could file complaints against their female lover at a WPS, which, according to them, was always the policy. They did not understand why I was told the opposite, and several mentioned that the Maria da Penha Law was specifically targeted to combat violence against *women* in cases of intimate partner and familial violence. For them, there was no difference between IPV in heterosexual or female same-sex relationships, and they were adamant that lesbian complainants were treated the same as heterosexual women. In fact, several mentioned their own cases that involved a lesbian couple. The ability for lesbian women to seek the services of a WPS in Salvador in 2013 seemed unquestionable, at least in the eyes of the WPS personnel. This finding could appear to demonstrate that lesbian women have equal access to all the services provided to heterosexual women, thereby refuting any allegations that they are unequal or second-class citizens in Brazil. Other findings, however, indicated that lesbian women, again, were invisible in Brazilian society and as victims of IPV. First, as previously mentioned, a lesbian woman was reportedly rebuffed when she sought the services of a WPS. While anecdotal, this occurrence demands attentiveness to the possibility that lesbian women could experience obstacles. Second, once I was told that lesbian women could be complainants, I inquired about the number of women who had actually registered a complaint or had just visited the WPS to discuss their victimization. Collectively, the six WPS personnel I interviewed had dealt with no more than *ten* cases that involved a lesbian couple over a five-year span. To provide a context to understand the insignificance of this number, 11,036 complaints were filed by women in 2013 at the women's police stations in Brotas and Peripe13 (Pacheco 2014), an increase from the 2012 figure of 10,352 (Adailton and Cirino 2013). Based on these interviews and the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador, Brazilian women may have the legal right to file a complaint against their female lover, but that does not mean they have the *cultural* right to do so. One could argue that the lack of lesbian complainants could merely be an indication that lesbian women do not desire to file complaints against their female lovers because they want to be discreet about their relationship problems or are ashamed. A focus on lesbian discretion, as I have argued in Chapter 2, is less an example of the naturally discreet nature of lesbian women and more the consequence of the demand for them to be silent and invisible. If women are reluctant to go to their neighborhood police stations to file a complaint against a male abuser because they fear the *machista* culture of the police, is it improbable that lesbian women do not seek the services of a WPS because

of the homophobia that pervades Brazilian society? Even if a lesbian woman decides to visit the WPS in Salvador, she will not be attended by personnel who have training in relation to IPV in same-sex relationships. I was told as much by the psychologist and social worker that were employed at the WPS in Brotas. While the personnel there and at Periperi station appeared to be sincere and committed to their work as advocates for women, their lack of awareness of the issues that lesbian women face was a form of erasure that has implications for the treatment of lesbian victims and perpetrators of IPV.

Conclusion

The creation of WPSs and the Maria da Penha Law are clear signs that Brazilian society is grappling with the problem of IPV against women. Both of these reforms are specifically geared to address violence against women as they exclusively focus on Brazilian women in terms of the women's-only clientele of WPSs and the gendered language of the Maria da Penha Law. Like Cecília MacDowell Santos, however, I am troubled by the implications of this "gendered citizenship," because even though Brazilian lesbian women are ostensibly included, it ultimately is heteronormative because "these gendered police stations contribute to the formation of a gendered citizenship that benefits married women or women in heterosexual love relationships" (2005:148). As Santos notes, these reforms enable the development of Brazilian women's status as citizens through their relationship with heterosexuality. Thus Brazilian women must become subjects and act within a heteronormative framework that is built on dominant/submissive, active/passive, and masculine/feminine paradigms. Even if, as Hautzinger and others desire, WPSs move beyond their essentialist ways of understanding womanhood, the patriarchal and heteronormative legacies that undergird the structure of WPSs cannot be ignored. As such, the combination of a masculinist police culture, conceptions about the role of WPSs, and the heteronormative mission of these stations effectively disenfranchises lesbian women. Ultimately, this heterosexualization of citizenship ensures the continuation of the heteropatriarchal nation-state (Alexander 2005), because women's membership in the body politic is predicated on their relationship with domination, which is always already masculinized within the Brazilian context. Brazilian lesbian women *may* be perceived as victims of IPV but only because their victimization is illustrative of their femininity, not their humanity.

Conclusion
At the Gates of Nineveh

> Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, "Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.
>
> Jonah 1:1–3[1]

After I left Salvador at the end of April 2008, I have often thought of Jonah, the most reluctant of Yahweh's messengers. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, I lived for the first few months of that year with Zita and Rita in a *popular* neighborhood in the city. Living with them, I regularly witnessed the tragic drama of Zita's relationship with her then girlfriend Simone. Quite honestly, I had never experienced or been a witness to intimate partner violence (IPV) before then, and I was also unaware that violent encounters were even a problem in lesbian relationships in Brazil. I soon realized, however, that their situation was not unique among the women I already knew or would soon meet. Over the course of those early months in 2008, women told me, unsolicited and rather nonchalantly, about the incidents of violence they had experienced. These incidents spanned the spectrum of violent encounters—from slaps or shoves to severe beatings. To be clear, not all the women I met during this time period or thereafter had been involved in physical altercations with their female lovers. Nevertheless, a pattern began to emerge that I could not ignore . . . cue my thoughts of Jonah.

The biblical book of Jonah, which was most likely written in the fifth or fourth century BCE, describes the travails of a postexilic Israelite who was called by Yahweh to deliver a stern message to the city of Nineveh: repent for your sins or die. Nineveh was the Assyrians' capital, and they were a people who had conquered the Israelites and destroyed their city of Samaria. Jonah considers the Assyrians his enemy and wants no part in Yahweh's plan to save them from

their sins. Accordingly, Jonah attempts to escape from completing this task by boarding a ship that is headed in the opposite direction from Nineveh (Collins 2004:534; Leith 2001:1321). On board and fast asleep, Jonah is awakened by the captain, who beseeches Jonah to pray to his god to calm the stormy seas. The captain's and his sailors' supplications to their gods had proven ineffective, and they were fearful. After the casting of lots, it becomes clear that Jonah is the cause of their misfortune, and he heroically advises the crew to throw him overboard to appease his angry god. Once thrown, Jonah is miraculously swallowed by a "large fish" (not a whale) and remains in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. During his entrapment, Jonah finally consents to travel to Nineveh, prays to God, and is then "spewed out upon the dry land" (Jonah 2:10). Jonah had accepted, albeit reluctantly, his calling to do God's bidding.

My Jonah Dilemma

While I do not think of myself as a prophetess or a messenger of God, I understand Jonah's dilemma of not wanting to tell a story that he was "supposed" to tell. In the midst of conducting ethnographic fieldwork, the ethnographer's goals and objectives frequently undergo modifications or even drastic changes. In my case, I had no interest in the issue of IPV or even the subject of violence as a whole. I intended to focus my research on what I felt to be the subversive nature of female same-sex sexuality in Salvador and Brazil. Early in my doctoral studies, I hypothesized that women in same-sex relationships disrupted nationalist and cultural ideologies about sexual desirability, race, and gender. And so I aspired to write an ethnography that celebrated women's sexual agency and described their experiences as subaltern citizens within Brazilian society. Another important consideration was the fact that very few studies had been conducted or published about Brazilian female same-sex sexuality by non-Brazilian scholars. Frankly, I was afraid of the potential pitfalls of a project about IPV in lesbian relationships: I did not want to be the scholar of those "violent lesbians" in Brazil. Hence, like Jonah, I attempted to flee from my responsibility as a messenger, and I sought to distance myself from the stories and my own experiences as a witness of IPV in lesbian relationships. Throughout the early months of my fieldwork, I struggled with how to reconcile my experiences with my expectations and hypotheses. Finally, I realized, like Jonah, that I needed to leave the belly of the fish and accept the reality around me. I was "spewed out upon dry land" when I fully understood that to ignore, dismiss, or downplay women's experiences of violence was of a form of erasure. Making invisible their experiences would have further reinforced the validity of one lesbian activist's description of lesbian women in Brazil to me: "We are phantasms." To elide the negative, damaging, and at times brutal aspects of lesbian and *entendida*

women's own subjectivity would be to rephantomize them through patronizing and condescending revisionism. This ethnography has thus endeavored to flesh out the symbiotic relationship between lesbian and *entendida* women's subjective experiences as individual women and their intersubjective experiences as Brazilian citizens who occupy an interstitial space in the cultural imaginary. Because of the synchronic and diachronic foci of this study, I have sought to examine the ways in which lesbian and *entendida* women embody their sexual desires, practices, and choices within specific historical, cultural, social, and political milieux. That being the case, this ethnography has steadily focused on the interplay between the subjective and intersubjective realities that affect the experiences and perspectives of the lesbian and *entendida* women I encountered in Salvador.

Brazilian Emotionality, Gender, and Power

The interaction between cultural and nationalist ideologies is one of the most significant relationships explored in this work. Control and dominance are constant themes throughout Brazilian history, and these themes are strongly associated with masculinity and power. In Gilberto Freyre's description of Brazil's racial democracy, men, in particular wealthy white men, were in charge, not women, and certainly not their *mulata* lovers. Former President Getúlio Vargas was a strong and domineering father figure for Brazilian citizens, who represented his submissive and loyal family. One of the legacies of these patriarchal narratives and assertions of Brazilian emotionality, as well as the manifestation of what I call erotic embodiment, is a Brazilian cultural landscape that hyperesteems the performance of all sentiments, whether they be creative or destructive, through bodily expression. Yet this legacy does not affect Brazilian women and men equally because men are always already recognized as the dominant partner in and outside the bedroom. Hence their extrarelational sexual activities and expressions of dominance through physical aggression are situated within a particular context. Unlike Brazilian women, their innate sexuality and sensuality does not have to be constrained because their actions only reinforce the cultural and social status quo. In contrast, Brazilian women who cuckold their boyfriends and husbands violate the sanctity of their intimate relationships and communal and societal mores about how women are supposed to behave. In a sense, they are cuckolding Brazilian society as well. While a heterosexual woman's ability to betray her male lover is restricted, lesbian women have more opportunities because they seemingly reject the cultural script of who is supposed to be their object of desire and the recipient of their *fogo* (fire). Ironically, their rejection and potential participation in bodily expressions of unrestricted sexual pleasure and romantic pain, like Brazilian men, is the ultimate expression

of Brazilian identity, their Brazilian birthright to be passionate, emotive, and authentic. Some may think that this description denigrates Brazilian people because I am arguing that they are a lascivious and sexually wanton people who cannot control themselves. In response, I would contend that among the culturally accepted descriptions and representations of Brazilian women and men within Brazilian culture are these ideologies that encompass emotionality, sexuality, and intensity. On the other hand, there is an ever decreasing space for brutal bodily expressions of anger and aggression when issues that involve jealousy and sexual betrayal arise in Brazilian culture. Although a "crimes of passion" defense is no longer considered tolerable in Brazilian society, a "between slaps and kisses" mentality continues to exist there. Brazil is not alone as we only need to look to American popular culture to see a similar attitude, which is exemplified in the often used trope of a woman and man who, in the midst of a verbal spat, begin to slap each other in the face, which then culminates in their surrender to the irresistible urge to kiss each other fervently and passionately. Is that violence? Is it an act of spousal abuse to push or shove a lover who cheats on you? It is important to consider, I suggest, the gradations of physical acts of aggression because identifying slaps, pushes, and shoves as acts of IPV can only be useful if we are distinguishing these actions from those that cause serious bodily injury and harm. Furthermore, focusing on the act itself and not the actor can lead to a broader understanding of how violence is both a feature of patriarchal structures that embolden men and, unfortunately, an expression of humanity. The use of violence as an expression of discontent, anger, and even passion by Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women is an example of the influence of Brazilian cultural ideologies that are rooted in masculinity and androcentrism. Yet their actions also reveal how Brazilian men culturally, socially, and historically rent but do not own this space of violence and domination. Theories about male aggression do not, in my estimation, adequately explain Freyre's assertions about the relationship between sadistic Brazilian master and masochistic indigenous and African women.

Lesbian Invisibility

The effects of these cultural discourses about Brazilian identity, sexuality, and gender norms are also evident in an examination of "lesbian invisibility" in Brazilian society. Lesbian, *entendida*, and other women in same-sex relationships were well aware of the cultural silences that especially surrounded female same-sex sexuality. Middle- and upper-middle-class older women like Margareth negotiated with cultural ostracism through a reframing of lesbian invisibility as lesbian "discretion." To Margareth and others, lesbian women's silence about their sexual and romantic affairs was due not to societal pressure but

rather to personal choice. Similar to the Greek women in Elisabeth Kirtso-glou's ethnography *For the Love of Women*, affluent Brazilian lesbian women appeared to live their lives devoid of *extreme* forms of discrimination and/or marginalization. Despite their relative acceptance of the need for discretion, they too, like some of the Greek women in Kirtsoglou's ethnography experienced feelings of powerlessness. They could not ignore the reality of social disapproval that awaited overt representations of female same-sex sexuality in their community. While there did not appear to be a relationship between age and level of comfort with social invisibility among the Greek women in Kirtsoglou's study, there were in fact clear distinctions in my study. Specifically, Margareth's and her friends' younger and less professionally established counterparts, like Susana and Lucia, felt anxiety, fear, angst, and pain because of socially imposed norms that dictated heteronormative behavior and appearances. More so than any other demographic in my study, middle- and upper-middle-class white and light brown–skinned women had divergent perspectives about the nature of lesbian identity and the societal pressure to conform and be "good heterosexual women." As I argued in Chapter 2, their experiences were analogous to the experiences of the black *cariocas* (residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro) in Robin Sheriff's discussion of "cultural censorship" in Brazil. Brazilian mores that discouraged informal conversations about racism or racially charged situations were powerful and insidious precisely because black *cariocas* internalized these beliefs, thereby engaging in an active form of self-regulation. The lesbian and *entendida* women in my study also practiced a form of cultural censorship by avoiding discussion of their sexual and romantic affairs and employing platonic terms to describe their female lovers. In fact, it could be argued that these women performed a specific kind of "silence" through their words and deeds. There are performative aspects to silence that signify the diverse manifestations of quietude as a lived concept.

Sexual and Gender Minorities and Violence in the Global Context

This embodiment of lesbian silence and invisibility is not benign in its effect and relates to the social violence that is perpetrated against *and* by lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador. I have specifically identified these experiences of lesbian invisibility as social violence because this concept conveys both the individuated and communal aspects of emotional, mental, and psychic oppression of female same-sex sexuality. While this study has focused on female same-sex sexuality in Brazil, research in the field of psychology has shown that homophobia, heterosexism, stigmatization, and stress are all phenomena that greatly impact the lives of women and men in same-sex relationships (Balsam 2003; Balsam and Mohr 2007; DiPlacido 1998; Greene and Croom 2000; Herek

2007; Herek and Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian and Gay Issues 1998; Herek et al. 2009; Hyman 2008). It is understandable that psychologists would be at the forefront in a discussion of sexual and gender minorities and mental health concerns; however, I believe that anthropologists should not cede the study of these important issues to the field of psychology. The medical anthropological theory of "social violence," for example, is a historically and culturally based concept that is particularly relevant in this discussion. On a profound level, the notion of social violence speaks to the relationship between external and internal mechanisms that adversely influence daily living. Categorizing societal- and self-regulated practices of lesbian "silencing" and invisibility as social violence is an unambiguous assessment of the damage homophobia, lesbophobia, transphobia, stigmatization, heterosexism, and stress cause in the lives of sexual and gender minorities. Social violence is also a useful theoretical tool in an analysis of the structural and institutional cultural processes that lead to discriminatory practices because homophobia is a "social fact" and not one individual person's preconceptions about same-sex sexuality.[2] Additionally, the social reality of homophobia necessitates an interdisciplinary conversation about same-sex sexuality and mental health, which should include cross-cultural discussions of IPV among same-sex couples. In general, scholars in psychology, social work, and public health have focused on the relationship between women's psychological profiles and childhood experiences, the effects of homophobia, and control issues to explain the presence of IPV in lesbian relationships (Burke and Follingstad 1999; Kulkin et al. 2007; Poorman 2001). In addition to these factors, this study has shown that it is of particular import to consider jealousy and infidelity as instigators of violence. Scholars of IPV do a disservice to women when they do not thoroughly examine the role of sexual feelings and emotional intensity in discussions about IPV in women's same-sex relationships. There are analytical benefits to a study of women's experiences with jealousy and infidelity because knowledge about these potential "triggers" acknowledges the similarities as well as differences between same-sex and heterosexual relationships.

Violence and Humanity

It is important to reiterate that IPV occurs in same-sex and heterosexual relationships in Brazil and globally for a variety of reasons, rationalizations, justifications, and of course, excuses. To focus on jealousy, passionate physicality, and intensity in lesbian relationships in my research is not an endorsement of women's employment of IPV or a desire to confine a discussion of IPV to these factors or influences. In addition, to assert that women are capable of and engage in physical violence does not diminish how women around the

world are more likely to be victims of physical, sexual, emotional, and social violence than the men in their societies. In particular, IPV—in its various forms—against women is a global phenomenon that affects the lives of women of different ages, races, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and political affiliations. Yet we cannot ignore or dismiss women's capacity for violence, whether as perpetrators of violence against their male or female lovers, children, the elderly, or as soldiers, revolutionaries, or terrorists. Consequently, discussions about IPV in heterosexual relationships and in scholarship about "gender-based violence" and "violence against women" need to develop contextually based strategies of confronting IPV.

Humanizing—not masculinizing, feminizing, or gendering—physical aggression and violence can directly and beneficially affect how we understand the roles of government, civil society, and communities in preventing, policing, and punishing physical aggression and violence in romantic relationships. The widespread dehumanization of perpetrators (primarily men) of physical violence invites the "othering" and dismissal of aggregates of men, mainly poor, working-class men of color in Brazil, the United States, and throughout the world. To be clear, in no way am I suggesting that those who inflict bodily harm, injury, and even death should not have to engage with authoritative institutions in society. I am suggesting, however, that how these engagements occur, the discourse surrounding these engagements, and the ideological frameworks that ground these engagements should transcend and not succumb to gendered tropes about the violent nature of men and the nonviolent nature of women.

Gendered Citizenship and Disjunctive Opportunities

In the Brazilian context, one of the major consequences of the erasure of women's capacity for violence has been the creation of a specific form of gendered citizenship—a *heterosexualized* citizenship for women. As a result of the formation of this heterosexualized citizenship, lesbian and *entendida* experience an elision of their status within the Brazilian citizenry: they are *phantasmal* citizens. This treatment of lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil is not a novel occurrence in Brazilian history, as there has always been an inegalitarian distribution of rights and privileges in this country. Although there has been this destabilization of inequality in Brazil, legislative, juridical, and political policies continue to distribute citizenship rights in an unequal and ultimately unjust fashion. Even as Brazil's disjunctive democracy continues to house traditional forms of citizenship that privilege men, the wealthy, and white Brazilians, it has also opened up a space for activism and civic participation. Thus it is not a coincidence that toward the end of the military dictatorship, feminist and women activists began to protest loudly against the virtual impunity granted

to men who committed "crimes of passion" and "honor killings." As a result, women's police stations (WPSs) were founded throughout Brazil, and women were finally supposed to have a safe place to go when they were the victims of IPV. In addition, legislative policies such as Law 9.099/95 in 1995 and, more important, the Maria da Penha Law in 2006, were ratified, which led to the creation of other state services whose purpose focused on the needs of battered women. These governmental actions included judicial courts that dealt with IPV cases, state-funded attorney offices, and mediation services. Based on the creation of these government programs and policies, it would appear that the era of differentiated citizenship had come to an end. Men could no longer commit violence against their female companions without fear of punishment. Despite these legislative victories, however, it is important to remember that the initiatives to curtail IPV had been produced through a disjunctive democratic process that still privileged "the haves" by way of legal manipulations, bureaucratic ineffectiveness, corruption, and limited access to power. Consequently, throughout Brazil, local government services that address the problem of IPV are routinely underfunded and understaffed, which has been the case for many of these programs since their inception. Even after the passage of the Maria da Penha Law, a more far-reaching and ground-breaking piece of legislation than Law 9.099/95, an effective implementation of domestic violence legislation is still a far-off goal for many locales throughout Brazil. Furthermore, one cannot forget that these institutions have been influenced by masculinist and patriarchal traditions and that, at times, WPSs and the judicial system have revictimized women (Hautzinger 2007; Santos 2005).

Heterosexualized Citizenship for Women

The practical, structural, and institutional problems and obstacles that have impeded the implementation of government programs to combat IPV represent the precarious nature of the gendered citizenship in Brazil. Philosophically, this form of gendered citizenship is problematic because it positions women as vulnerable and weak citizens who need protection from the men in their lives. In essence, a woman must run to her father (the state) in order to deal with her husband or boyfriend because the tools in her "feminine" arsenal are ill-equipped to handle her partner's masculine power. The infantilization of Brazilian women becomes clearer when one considers the experiences of lesbian women. They experience a great disservice because they must position themselves within a heteronormative framework in order to be seen as victims of IPV. The lack of training and knowledge about same-sex relationships by the personnel of the women's police stations in Salvador reinforces the cultural erasure of lesbian and *entendida* women. This erasure occurs because their

experiences are perceived through a heteronormative lens that is framed by the masculinist and homophobic ideologies pervasive in Brazilian society. Purportedly, the creation of WPSs and the laws governing domestic violence in Brazil advantageously redefined women's relationship with the state and their status as Brazilian citizens. This redefinition, however, has also produced limitations in the recognition and acknowledgement of women's capacity as individuals. The repercussions of this form of gendered citizenship are varied and at times adversely affect women. Nira Yuval-Davis's concept of a "multilayered citizenship" provides a context for understanding how gender is one layer within the structural formation of citizenship:

> That citizenship needs to be understood as a multi-layered construct, in which one's citizenship in collectivities in the different layers—local, ethnic, national, state, cross- or trans-state and supra-state—is affected and often at least partly constructed by the relationships and positionings of each layer in specific historical context. . . . Questions of sexuality, ability and reproduction play important roles in the ways communities and states construct the rules and regulations of membership in communities and states. No consideration of contemporary citizenship can be complete without examining the varied and changing ways in which people's intimate lives, their families and their networks of friendship affect and are affected by their activities as citizens. The gendered body is often a site of multi-layered rules and regulations. (1999:122–23)

Within the Brazilian context, formal citizenship has undergone various transformations that have provided or denied privileges and rights based on race, class, gender, and now, sexuality. From both structural and philosophical standpoints, the governmental services that cater to the needs of battered victims of IPV have been conceptualized within both gendered and sexualized frameworks. Again, there is no question that women's police stations and other government programs and policies have saved the lives of many women in Brazil. However, a consequence of this formation is the masculinized and heteronormative nature of Brazilian policies that foreground female heterosexuality as the basis for Brazilian women's citizenship. Politically, pragmatically, socially, culturally, and emotionally, this form of gendered citizenship is a continuation of Brazil's history of differentiated citizenship. The legalization of privileges and the legitimization of inequalities are now maintained through the trappings of heterosexuality and heteronormativity. While lesbian women—as women—may legally have the right to file a complaint against a female lover, the cultural and structural gendering of this right is also rooted in the sexualization of Brazilian womanhood as always already heterosexual: Brazilian women need protection from not violent people but violent men.

The Consequences of "Erotic Autonomy"

By addressing this particular formation of gendered citizenship in Brazil, this study contributes to international dialogues about the relationship between women's sexual experiences, cultural norms, nationalism, and citizenship. I propose that the experiences of perceived "subaltern" and marginalized peoples can reveal much about hidden or ignored elements that form the "underbelly" of nationalist ideologies. For example, lesbian and *entendida* women in Brazil become "bad" citizens who must perform heteronormativity in order to receive certain rights and benefits. Because of their "sexual inadequacy," Brazilian women's same-sex relationships and identities, unconsciously and unwittingly, constitute sites of political resistance because they disrupt patriotic assumptions. The experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women illustrate the usefulness of M. Jacqui Alexander's concept of "erotic autonomy": "Erotic autonomy signals danger to the heterosexual family and to the nation. And because loyalty to the nation as citizen is perennially colonized within reproduction and heterosexuality, erotic autonomy brings with it the potential of undoing the nation entirely, a possible charge of irresponsible citizenship, or no responsibility at all" (2005:22–23). Alexander's discussion of erotic autonomy arises out of her work on the intersection of sexuality, gender, imperialism, and politics in the Bahamas. While Alexander argues that female as well as male "prostitutes" are identified as "outlaws" within the Bahamian context (Alexander 2005:23), the Brazilian disruptions are distinctly *feminine* in nature. The Brazilian feminization of this erotic autonomy indicates that there is the need for further theorization of the relationship between nationalist ideologies and *gendered* forms of same-sex sexualities. Globally, women and men in same-sex relationships share experiences and confront common discriminatory practices; however, cross-cultural perceptions about women's innate vulnerability and weakness has political ramifications that affect women in same-sex relationships. Accordingly, serious consideration should be given to the idea that the specific disenfranchisement of women in same-sex relationships is a transnational phenomenon.

Lesbian Erotic Embodiment and Transnational Female Sexualities

To end this ethnography by focusing solely on lesbian invisibility, women's capacity for violence, and the second- or third-class citizenship of women in same-sex relationships would be distortive and incomplete. The documentation and critique of the structural, social, and physical forms of violence that lesbian and *entendida* women experience is indeed a worthy pursuit that contributes to both academic and nonacademic discourses about violence, discrimination against sexual and gender minorities, citizenship, and gender.

Nevertheless, the lesbian and *entendida* women are more than victims or second- or third-class citizens; they are sexual beings whose experiences illustrate that a sensual interplay of racial and gendered fantasies are integral aspects of sexuality. Furthermore, because the vast majority of the women in the study were Afro-Brazilian—most self-identified as *negra* (black)—this study, like Gloria Wekker's *Politics of Passion* (2006), adds to the growing literature that foregrounds black women's sexual pleasure as a site of analysis (Holland 2012; Nash 2014; Melancon et al. 2015; Miller-Young 2014; Rose 2003; Thompson 2009). These contributions identify how black women's embodiment of erotic desire is intertwined with their blackness, revealing that the formation of desire produces at times contradictory urges. As I noted in Chapter 3, it is not a coincidence that many of the Afro-Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women in the study enjoyed *roçando a bunda* (genital-to-buttocks contact). Performance of this culturally gendered sexual activity—whether as the dominant, submissive, or both—was simultaneously conforming to and transgressing dominant Brazilian sexual norms. In particular, the sexual negotiations, or the mental acrobatics, of the masculine-identified lesbian women allowed them to maintain their masculine/active sexual identity in sexual encounters when they received pleasure in potentially "emasculating" positions. In and of themselves, the sexual proclivities and practices of these Afro-Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women do not provide meaningful information about their lives or even black female sexuality. It is only when their sexual practices are analyzed within specific *embodied* contexts that it is possible to extrapolate about the relationships between sexual pleasure and historical, cultural, and social environments.

Gathering at the Gates of Nineveh

Unlike Jonah, I cannot claim a divine certitude in regard to my extrapolations about the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women in Salvador, Brazil. Thus I wish to send out a clarion call, especially to Brazilian lesbian scholars, for the production of more research about IPV in women's same-sex relationships. In particular, IPV research that is attuned to possible regional differences as well as socioeconomic, gender identity, and racial issues would greatly expand upon the research and analysis that I have already conducted. Additionally, my interactions with gay men indicate that specific research about the experiences gay and *entendido* men with IPV is a necessity. In conversations, several gay male activists have opined that IPV is more of a problem among lesbian and *entendida* women because, in their estimation, lesbian women display more expressions of jealousy than gay men. They argue that jealousy is less of an issue among gay men because sexual fidelity and monogamy is not as high a priority for them as it is for women, in general. Unfortunately, few studies have been

conducted on the topic of jealousy and infidelity in same-sex relationships in Brazil and their findings vary (de Souza et al. 2006; Féres-Carneiro 1997; Heilborn 2004). Accordingly, research about the prevalence of IPV in gay men's relationship, as well as in the relationships between transgender and transsexual women and self-identified heterosexual men, is also needed. Additionally, more than an academic exercise, this research about IPV in lesbian relationships has practical implications. First, women's police station personnel should receive specific training to deal with cases that involve female same-sex couples. They should also begin to process complaints that are filed by men who are victims of IPV. Despite the problematic structure, philosophy, and overall effectiveness of the services provided by women's police stations, they are the primary government institutions that handle cases of IPV. Furthermore, some of the problems endemic to women's police stations, such as their inclusion in a highly masculinist branch of the government, require societal and cultural transformations. Notwithstanding these critiques, the underfunding and understaffing of women's police stations and the other governmental offices that serve the needs of battered victims can more easily be remedied with a responsible infusion of financial resources into these government institutions. Fundamentally, the focus of women's police stations on only one demographic group—heterosexual women—limits the overall reach of IPV prevention strategies in Brazil. The nature of IPV and the diverse actors who are involved in the perpetuation of this form of interpersonal violence necessitates broader and more inclusive government services. A major issue that government agencies, civil society organizations, as well as women, feminist, and LGBT activists must realistically grapple with is the "between slaps and kisses" mentality that is pervasive in Brazil. On the other hand, as important as government intervention can and should be in how a society confronts IPV, the prevalence of IPV in Brazil will not be solved by the local, state, or federal government. The Brazilian government does have an integral role to play in the IPV prevention process; however, political reforms and policy implementations cannot in and of themselves change Brazilian society. For example, the contrast between Brazilian political advancements in the arena of LGBT rights and the high rate of violence against LGBT Brazilian citizens in the country is a notable and cautionary tale. Cultural and ideological transformations within a society are equally or at times more necessary than political reforms. Brazil stands at a precipice in its attempts to combat IPV within its borders. This ethnography project suggests that integral, and not supplemental, to the country's goal of IPV attrition is an inclusion of the experiences of lesbian and *entendida* women into national and community discussions about violence in romantic relationships.

In conclusion, the treatment of lesbian and *entendida* women as phantasmal Brazilian citizens is indicative of specific ideological forces at work in Brazilian

society as a whole, forces that are gendered, sexualized, and racialized. The marginalization of their experiences in relation to IPV, for example, represents a structural and systematic erasure of women in same-sex relationships from the Brazilian citizenry. Nonetheless, despite cultural mandates for their invisibility, lesbian and *entendida* women have also created a Brazilian identity of their own that upends and perturbs androcentric and nationalist constructions of sexual power and desirability. The pleasure and even the pain that characterize the lives of the women in my study illustrate that Brazilian lesbian and *entendida* women are not phantasms. They are embodied and agentive individuals with complex lives who are shaped by communities that too often seek to erase them even as lesbian and entendida women also reshape those communities in turn.

Glossary

assumir a identidade lésbica—to assume a lesbian identity

axé—Candomblé concept that signifies the spiritual energy that produces and generates harmony and balance in the universe

axé music—Afro-Brazilian music that is an infusion of samba, reggae, percussion, and pop

bairro nobre—"noble neighborhood"; middle-class or upper-middle-class neighborhood

bairro popular—"popular neighborhood"; poor/working-class neighborhood

bicha—man who is the "passive" participant in a sexual encounter with another man; a "faggot" (slur)

bloco—Carnaval parade group

bofe—masculine lesbian woman; "butch"

branco—official racial category; white person

branqueamento—whitening

bunda—"ass" or buttocks

camionheira—literal translation: female truck driver, but synonymous with dyke (slur)

comer—to eat; term used to signify the person who occupies the active position in a sexual encounter

carinho—caress; care or affection

carioca—resident of Rio de Janeiro

dar—to give; term used to signify the person who occupies the passive position in a sexual encounter

delegada—police officer, magistrate

ekedi—noninitiate woman in Candomblé

entendida—code word for woman who has female lovers

entendido—code word for man who has male lovers; a term that does not identify if a man is the active or passive partner in a sexual encounter

entre tapas e beijos—"between slaps and kisses"

esfregar—to rub; refers to genital-to-genital or genital-to-body contact

filha de santo—"daughter of saint"; woman initiated into Candomblé

homem—man; man who is the "active" participant in a sexual encounter with another man

leide—feminine lesbian woman; femme

lésbica—lesbian woman

loira—light-skinned or white woman; blonde woman

mãe de santo—"mother of saint"; Candomblé priestess

mãe-preta—black mother; akin to "black mammy" figure in the United States

moreno—brown-skinned person, can be *escuro* (dark) or *claro* (light)

mulata—woman of African and European ancestry, often eroticized

mulher lésbica—lesbian woman

negro—dark brown–skinned person and/or person with (some) African ancestry who identifies with Afro-Brazilian culture

ogã—uninitiated male member of a Candomblé house

orixás—natural forces, supernatural spirits, and divinized ancestors of Candomblé

pai de santo—"father of saint"; Candomblé priest

pardo—official racial category; person of racially mixed heritage; brown-skinned person; person of African and European, European and indigenous, or African, European, and indigenous ancestry

paulista—resident of São Paulo

preto—official racial category; person with dark brown skin; can be used as a racial slur

roçar—to rub; refers to genital-to-genital or genital-to-body contact

sacanagem—transgression or violation

sapatão—literal translation: man who wears big shoes or "big shoe," but synonymous with dyke (slur)

sapatona—literal translation: woman who wears big shoes or "big shoe," but synonymous with dyke (slur)

soteropolitano—resident of Salvador

terreiro—house or compound of Candomblé

tesão—sexual heat, lust, excitement

tristeza brasileira—Brazilian sadness

transgênero—transgender

transsexual—transsexual, could be considered "transgender" in North American and European contexts

travesti—literal translation: transvestite or "cross-dresser"; could also be considered "transsexual" or "transgender" in North American and European contexts

Notes

Preface

1. Pseudonyms have been given to people interviewed in this study, and minor personal details have been changed in order to protect an individual's anonymity.
2. Lagoa Grande is a pseudonym for the working-class neighborhood in Salvador where I lived.

Introduction

1. See Costa (2004), Grossi (2004), Pinto (2003), and Sarti (2004) for discussions of the feminist movement in Brazil.
2. The acceptance of IPV in Brazilian society is exemplified in the popularity of the phrase: "*Em briga de marido e mulher, não se mete a colher*" ("In a fight between husband and wife, don't dip your spoon") (Hautzinger 2007:147), which means that "one should not interfere between a man and a woman." Also see Saffioti for a discussion of a similar phrase (1987:80).
3. There is a global academic debate about the "naming" of same-sex sexual practices and relationships (Blackwood 2000; Blackwood and Wieringa 1999; Wekker 1993). In particular, some scholars reject the term "lesbian" because it is wedded to European and North American conceptualizations of sexuality. Furthermore, they argue that lesbianism is a concept that is based on identity politics and that the notion of a "lesbian identity can ignore the experiences of women who do not use their sexual relations and romantic partnerships as a way to posit their self-identity or selfhood." However, within the Brazilian context, *mulher lésbica* (lesbian women) was a common phrase used by the vast majority of Brazilian women I encountered. They employed this term as a form of self-identification or in their descriptions of other women's same-sex relationships. In addition, phrases like "female same-sex sexuality," "women who have same-sex relationships," and "women in romantic and sexual relationships with other women" are used in this ethnography.
4. Literally, *entendido* could be translated as "one in the know," a code word that was used to convey knowledge about same-sex desiring Brazilians and the places they frequented in mid-twentieth-century Brazil (Green 1999a:179). The word *entendida* often accompanies the phrase "lesbian woman" in this ethnography because a few women did not self-identify as lesbian women, but as *entendidas*, illustrating the longevity of this "code word."

5. I specifically employ the concept "ideology" here because even though dominant cultural, social, political, and sexual forces in Brazilian society are pervasive and insidious (hegemony), as there is an *agentive* aspect to this form of power. Brazilians, even poor black lesbian and *entendida* women wield societal "signs and objects" to their perceived benefit (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). Furthermore, national symbols and "stereotypes" are ideologies that live within a culture's history, thus enabling proactive or agentive participation in national ideological processes, which can be used for official as well as subversive purposes (Herzfeld 1997).

6. "Sexual citizenship . . . has served to largely maintain the purity of the moral community, conceal impurities and fragment and distract potential dissent, and to quite clear material and ideological ends. Central to such a process has been the further social construction of sexualities within these by now well established material parameters" (Evans 1993:8).

7. Aihwa Ong's "flexible citizenship" conveys even more so the importance of economic realities in the decision-making processes of individuals, not citizens of a particular nation-state, in the globalized marketplace (1999).

8. For an in-depth critique of Evan's "sexual citizenship" that focuses on the limits of his materialist analysis, see Angelia Wilson's "The 'Neat Concept' of Sexual Citizenship: A Cautionary Tale for Human Rights Discourse" (2009).

9. Citizenship is discussed in greater detailed in Chapter 5 and the Conclusion.

10. The introduction to the edited volume *The Limits of Gendered Citizenship: Contexts and Complexities* calls for a gendered *intersectional* analysis of citizenship, arguing that gender is only one aspect of how citizenship is constructed in the national and supranational European context (Oleksy et al. 2011).

11. See the introduction by Sian Lazar in the edited volume of *The Anthropology of Citizenship: A Reader* for an overview of anthropology's examination of citizenship (Lazar and Nuijten 2013).

12. For example, Siobhan Somerville's *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* argues "that questions of race—in particular the formation of notions of 'whiteness' and 'blackness' must be understood as a crucial part of the history and representation of sexual formations, including lesbian and gay identity and compulsory heterosexuality in the United States" (2000:5).

13. See Scott Morgensen's "Setter Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities," which makes the case that "settler homonationalism extends a larger project in which I am centering settler colonialism as a condition of the formation of modern queer subjects, cultures, and politics in the United States" (2010:106). Additionally, Greensmith and Giwa have employed "settler homonoationalism" to critique white queer settler subjectivities, which are represented in the treatment of indigenous two-spirt people during Pride Toronto (2013).

14. Throughout the work, I use black or Afro-Brazilian to identify the nonwhite women in the study. Racial categories and ideologies in Brazil are discussed in the next chapter.

15. I discuss my critiques of Parker's claims in Chapter 3.

16. The only time Goldstein mentions same-sex sexuality is in reference to the works of Richard Parker, James Green, and Peter Fry and their analyses about active/passive sexuality (2003:129–61).

17. The Castle article discusses lesbian activism in Campinas, Brazil, and is the first substantial publication I have found in English about lesbian women's experiences in Brazil (2008). The Mora and Monteiro article is a public health article that focuses on women who have sex with women and STI/HIV prevention (2010). Lastly, the Whitam et al. article is based on a limited ethnographic study conducted in the 1980s in Salvador with sixty-one lesbian women. The study is a comparison of lesbian and heterosexual women's experiences in four countries: Brazil, Peru, the Philippines, and the United States. Overall, I found the analysis in this study superficial, for example: "*Brazilian lesbians seem well tolerated in Brazilian society and enjoy a high degree of personal freedom.* Yet some respondents reported that under the previous military government, lesbians, along with male homosexuals, Blacks, poor people, and others, were subject to arbitrary arrest and other forms of harassment in a 'show of power'" (1998:36 [italics added]).

18. The Heilborn (2004) and Grossi (2003) texts have sections that focus on lesbian women and their experiences in romantic relationships and as parents, but they are not the focal point of these works nor do the authors provide significant information about lesbian life in Brazil in general. As for the Moutinho text (2006), this short text provides ethnographic data from only two young men, Saulo and Marcos.

19. Also see Nogueira (2008), who describes the American poet Elizabeth Bishop's romantic relationship with the Brazilian architect Lota de Macedo Soares, providing historical information about the experiences of women in same-sex relationships in the mid-twentieth century.

20. In *A Coisa Obscura*, Bellini examines the testimonies and histories of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonial women in northeast Brazil who were criminally penalized for their same-sex sexual practices or relationships. Bellini concludes that Portuguese religious and secular juridical procedures differentiated male and female "homosexual" acts, and female transgressors received lesser punishments than their male counterparts. Interestingly, some women received harsher religious and judicial punishments if they used a penile-like instrument in sexual encounters with other women (1989:65). Bellini's work is important because she notes the ambiguity that surrounded the treatment of female same-sex acts in colonial society.

21. Fernando Batinga de Mendonça's *A Outra Banda da Mulher* is a collection of interviews with eight women. Mendonça is interested in the interplay between heterosexism, *machismo* culture, and women's sexual experiences with each other.

22. In *Lesbianismo no Brazil*, Mott utilizes historical documents to describe the treatment of lesbian women in popular culture, literature, and by the government from the colonial era until the 1980s (1987). One of the most significant

findings from this text is Mott's observation that self-identified lesbian women have historically been treated differently from gay men.

23. There are very few published ethnographic works about female same-sex sexuality in Brazil, but there have been recent doctoral and masters theses produced on this subject (Almeida 2005; Lacombe 2005; Lessa 2007; Meinerz 2005; Perucchi 2001; Simões and Facchini 2009; Souza 2005).

24. Another significant ethnographic discussion of black female same-sex sexuality in the African Diaspora is Mignon Moore's sociological work *Invisible families: Gay identities, relationships, and motherhood among black women*. The ethnography focuses on the experiences of black women in the United States who are mothers in same-sex relationships.

25. Evelynn Hammonds has noted that black feminists scholars, like black women activists in the early twentieth century, have continued to "police" and be "silent" about the positive aspects of black women's sexuality and experiences because of their fears of exploitation and denigration (1994, 1997). A major consequence of the continuation of these tactics of policing and silencing has been the marginalization of black lesbian theorists in the United States as well as a focus on the sexual exploitation and violence committed against black women (Nash 2008). See Harris (1996, 2008) and her development of a "queer black feminism," which is a theoretical orientation that has been influenced by Hammonds's works. Lastly, Sharon Holland's *The Erotic of Racism* expands her focus to include a critique of how black women are elided, within queer scholarship, which "often engages in the particular 'American' practice of forgetting black. female.queer" (2012:81).

26. See the seminal anthology edited by David Riches and his influential introduction "The Phenomenon of Violence" (1986). Also see the following texts for examples of operational, cognitive, and experiential frameworks of analyzing violence: Abbink and Aijmer (2000), Bowman (2001), Krohn-Hansen (1997), Schmidt and Schröder (2001), Jansen and Löfving (2008), and Stewart and Strathern (2002).

27. Medical anthropologists have been at the forefront of discussing subjectivity in anthropology (Aretxaga 1997; Biehl et al. 2007; Biehl and Locke 2010; Csordas 1990; Good et al. 2008; Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987).

28. "The original meaning of violence against women—men's violence against their partners in the form of rape, assault, and murder—has expanded to include female genital mutilation/cutting, gender-based violence by police and military forces in armed conflict as well as in everyday life, violence against refugee women and asylum seekers, trafficking and prostitution, female feticide and infanticide, early and forced marriage, honor killings, and widowhood violations" (Merry 2006:21). Also see *IASC Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings* (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2007).

29. Lori Heise's 1998 article describes in detail her theoretical employment of an ecological framework in the study of IPV.

30. See the special issues of *Violence against Women* and their expansive look at domestic violence for critiques of the Dobashes' claims and notions of "family violence" and the "gender symmetry hypothesis" (Bible et al. 2002a, 2002b, 2003).

31. The 2011 anthology *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ lives*, edited by a leading expert in the field of IPV studies in lesbian relationships, Janice Ristock, is a diverse collection of ethnographic and theoretical writings about IPV within the LGBTQ population.

32. Hester and Donovan (2009) and Irwin (2008) discuss IPV in lesbian relationships in the United Kingdom and Australia, respectively.

33. Gabriel (2007) collated and wrote an annotated bibliography of the literature about IPV in same-sex relationships in North America. In addition, Baker et al. (2013) reviews the literature about IPV in same-sex relationships and argues that the research and analysis about same-sex couples is relevant for the study of IPV in heterosexual relationships.

34. The following are reasons given for the variation in study findings: limited or expanded definitions of "intimate partner violence," which may or may not include physical, emotional, verbal, psychological, or mental manifestations of violence; feelings of shame and embarrassment by LGBTQ activists and people in relation to the presence of IPV in LGBTQ relationships; study sample sizes; and the undervaluing of women's capacity for violence (Hassouneh and Glass 2008; Potoczniak et al. 2003; Renzetti and Miley 1998; Speziale and Ring 2006; Turrell 2000; West 2002).

35. Erica de Souza's unpublished dissertation about lesbian motherhood and family life devotes a section to a discussion of IPV among the lesbian couples in her study (Souza 2005:128–34).

36. These lesbian and gay organizations in Salvador are discussed in the next chapter. In addition to my interactions with LGBT activists from Salvador, I interviewed eight lesbian activists from Fortaleza, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. I also attended LGBT national academic and activist conferences in Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo.

37. Throughout this work, I use "LGBT" when discussing *lésbicas* (lesbians), *gays* (gays), and *bissexuais* (bisexuals), as well as *travestis* (female transgender or transsexual), *transgêneros* (transgender), and *transsexuais* (transsexual) individuals because these terms are used as categories for sexual and gender minorities in Brazil. On the other hand, queer is a term primarily used by some Brazilian academics and activists. When discussing sexual and gender minorities within the North American and European contexts, I use the term "LGBTQ."

38. See Caldwell (2007) and McClaurin (2001) for discussions of conducting fieldwork as black women in black communities. Additionally, Gilliam and Gilliam (1999) has been "useful to think with" in my contemplation of being a black woman who conducts ethnographic research in Brazil.

39. Despite the sensitive nature of the subject matter, face-to-face interviews and surveys of individuals about their sexual histories, experiences, and opinions have proven to be effective methods of gathering information (Schmitt 2005; Siegal and Krauss 1994).

40. Racial categories and ideologies in Brazil are discussed in the next chapter. For example, some of the women who self-identified as *negra* (black) did so for cultural reasons and not because of the darkness of their skin tone.

41. Only white and light brown–skinned women in my study lived in the noble neighborhoods.
42. The employment breakdown was for 2008–9.

Chapter 1

1. James Green argues in *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil* that "for many foreign observers . . . these varied images of uninhibited and licentious Brazilian homosexuals who express sensuality, sexuality, or camp during Carnival festivities have come to be equated with an alleged cultural and social toleration for homosexuality and bisexuality in that country" (1999a:3).
2. Marilda Santanna's *As donas do canto: O sucesso das estrelas-intérpretes no Carnaval de Salvador* provides a history of important changes to the production and performance of Carnaval in Salvador in the 1970s with the increased visibility of *blocos de trio* (parade groups that are accompanied by trucks that are outfitted with sound systems and musicians who perform on the rooftops of the trucks) (2009:44–52).
3. Of the "noble neighborhoods," Barra has the most socioeconomic mixture. Barra also has a problem with crime as it is the largest tourist neighborhood in the city, with its beaches lined with hotels and inns.
4. The monthly minimum wage in Brazil in 2009 was R$465 *reais* ($200 dollars at the time) (Costa 2009).
5. Even though there was a large police presence during the years I attended Carnaval, I was repeatedly warned by my friends to be careful, and they too were diligent about their own safety.
6. Ilê Aiyê is an Afro-Brazilian cultural and political organization founded in 1974 (Crook et al. 1999).
7. Another distinctive memory: I was a few feet away from the supermodel Naomi Campbell when she walked through the Cortejo Afro *bloco* during one of the nighttime parades in the neighborhood of Barra in 2008.
8. It is important to state that there is no "one" form of Brazilian nationalism. In this ethnography, I focus on nationalist ideologies that were developed before the mid-twentieth century. There have been cultural and political movements in the latter half of the twentieth century that have been influential in the construction of nationalist ideologies, including the Tropicália cultural movement, which was rooted in cultural anthropophagy (Leu 2006; Maltz et al. 1993; Naves 2001; Philippou 2005; Souza 2005; Veloso and Einzig 2002); the phenomenon of Musica Popular Brasileira (MPB) (Perrone 2002; Perrone et al. 2002; Santos 2004; Teixeira 2003; Vianna and Chasteen 1999); and the black activist movement that began in the 1970s (Butler 1998; Fontaine 1980, 1985; Hanchard 1994b; Movimento Negro Unificado 1988; Nascimento 1978, 1985; Pereira and Silva 2009).
9. See Kelly and Kaplan for their treatment of the study of nationalism in anthropology (2001). Also see Lomnitz-Adler for a critique Anderson's analysis of nationalism (2001).

10. Other significant analyses of Brazilian nationalism include the following works: Costa (2000), Davis (1999), Leite (1969), Mota (1977), and Ortiz (1985).

11. In 1886, two years before the official end of slavery, the Immigration Promotion Society was created (Butler 1998:27).

12. The eugenics movement of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Europe and the United States was also influential in Brazil (Schwarcz 1999).

13. See *The Mansions and the Shanties* for Freyre's thoughts about white Brazilian women who also demonstrated sadistic tendencies toward their female slaves (1966).

14. The Brazilian *mãe-preta* would be somewhat equivalent to the figure of Aunt Jemima. This matronly black woman cared for her young white charges and her surrogate white family throughout the times of slavery and into the twentieth century (Roberts 1994).

15. "But, despite its negative consequences, emotionality was also positively valued as a particular feature of Brazilian social relations. Most of all, unlike other 'civilised' societies riveted by racial differences, it could bring closer different races and social classes, promoting a peculiar form of solidarity that coexisted with a hierarchical social order. As we see next, many of these ideas are found in the present, albeit in new and varied ways" (Rezende 2008:111–12).

16. One important critique of Besse's and Caulfield's works is that they do not focus sufficiently on the issue of race in their discussions of womanhood, femininity, and the patriarchy in early twentieth-century Brazil.

17. See Michael Herzfeld's *The Poetics of Manhood* (1985), Stanley Brandes's *Metaphors of Masculinity* (1980), and John G. Peristiany's *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (1966) for analysis of Mediterranean masculinity.

18. "Cultural intimacy—the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality, the familiarity with the bases of power that may at one moment assure the disenfranchised a degree of creative irreverence and at the next moment reinforce the effectiveness of intimidation" (Herzfeld 1997:3).

19. See Goldstein (1999) for her analysis of how poor Afro-Brazilian women position themselves as sultry mulatas in order to appear desirous to white male *marital* partners—colorblind erotic democracy.

20. Also see Lovell and Bercovich (1991) and Lovell and Wood (1998) for statistics about life expectations and job opportunities for black and nonblack Brazilians.

21. Kia Caldwell (2001, 2007) and Matilde Ribeiro (1995, 2008) are scholars who detail and analyze the history of black women's activism in Brazil and in different parts of this country.

22. The unofficial motto of Salvador and the state of Bahia is *a terra da felicidade* (the land of happiness).

23. Black female politicians in Salvador have put to the forefront issues that deal with race and racial discrimination in the city (McCallum 2007; Mitchell 2009).

24. Michael Hanchard has argued that a divide between cultural and political activism has limited the influence of the black civil rights movement in Brazil

(1994b). In contrast, Keisha-Khan Perry and Kim Butler argue that political activism should not be narrowly construed; for example, Candomblé houses have been involved in political protests and the institution itself is a sign of Afro-Brazilian resistance (Butler 1998; Perry 2004).

25. Afro-Brazilian religions such as Macumba and Xangô share some religious tenets, belief systems, and structures with the three main Candomblé nations in Salvador. In addition, there are various forms of both Macumba and Xango that have been heavily influenced by Nagô traditions (Ribeiro 1978; Segato 2000; Wafer 1991).

26. *Acarajé* is a ball of bean paste that is fried in *dendé* oil and then opened and filled with small dried shrimp, shrimp paste, and an onion and tomato-based salad.

27. Friday is the day in Candomblé that is dedicated to Oxalá, the father of the orixás, and the color white is his preferred color.

28. J. Lorand Matory argues that there are social, economic, and cultural reasons for Quêto dominance in Brazil, particularly in Salvador (1999).

29. Roger Bastide and Peter Fry describe critiques of Landes's text by some of her peers like Melville Herskovits. After the publication of her ethnography, Landes academic career suffered (Bastide 1978:221; Fry 1982:61–62).

30. For a more thorough analysis of same-sex sexuality, gender roles, and identity, see Allen (2012). I argue in the article that Candomblé provides different forms of affirmation for lesbian women and gay men, which relate to the theology and social function of this religion.

31. Few other women, less than ten, were active members of other religions, including at least three women who were practicing Catholics. Even though they were still apart of the Catholic faith, they were frustrated with the Church because of its position on same-sex sexuality.

32. Author translation.

33. Lesbian women in the Quêto nation of Candomblé in Salvador experience "undervisibility" in the religion, and they are reticent to disclose information about their relationships with other women to members of their *terreiros* for fear of reprisals. Furthermore, the likelihood of this reality is increased because both nations are known as having more male priests in them in comparison to the Quêto nation (Bastide 1978; Carneiro 1986 [1948]; Harding 2000; Voeks 1997). For example, one Angola priest I interviewed stated that his nation was "patriarchal."

34. The Instituto de Estudos da Religião (ISER; Religious Studies Institute) in Rio de Janeiro worked with Candomblé and other Afro-Brazilians religions to develop the Odo-Ya Project, which was an HIV/AIDS educational, preventive, and treatment program targeted at practitioners of these religions (Silva and Guimara 2000). It is also important to note that there could be stigma toward practitioners who have HIV because of religious beliefs about how HIV affects *axé* (spiritual energy) (Rios et al. 2011).

35. The partnership between the Brazilian government and LGBT activists is not necessarily equal. Dehesa's analysis of the movement's relationship with the Brazilian Health Ministry is illustrative: "There is no doubt that the Health Ministry's extensive infusion or resources into the movement has contributed

significantly to its impressive growth and increased visibility since the 1990s. At the same time, the effects of its involvement in the social movement field are by no means neutral. Not only has it strengthened certain groups and sectors of the movement over others, but organizations often adapt their activities to funding priorities set externally" (2010:184). Additionally, the growing power of Pentecostal and Evangelical Christian politicians at all levels of governance in Brazil (Johansen 2014; Machado 2012) has had significant ramifications for LGBT Brazilians—as well as practitioners of Candomblé (Silva 2007). Politicians in the *Frente Parlamentar Evangélica* (Evangelical Parliamentary Front), or *bancada evangélica* (Evangelical Caucus), actively condemn LGBT civil rights from both the pulpit and the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil's National Congress. The strength of Evangelical political power in Brazil is exemplified in Brazilian Socialist Party presidential candidate Marina Silva's retraction of the safeguards and protections for LGBT Brazilians that were proposed in her original campaign manifesto (Marques 2014a). Because of the retraction, Silva, a self-proclaimed Evangelical politician, lost the support of some LGBT leaders in her own party of Brazilian Socialists (Marques 2014b).

36. For other interpretations of the divisions among the lesbian and gay activists in the early 1980s, see Green (1994:46–49), Dehesa (2010:103–4), Trevisan (2004:335–73), and Vainfas (1986, 1989).

37. GALF emerged from the lesbian group, Grupo Lesbica Feminista, which had been organized from within Somos (Facchini 2005; Lessa 2007).

38. Facchini (2005:102–19) provides further details and useful analysis about this "declining" (her quotes) period in the gay rights movement in Brazil during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

39. The only São Paulo organization that survived through this period and into the 1990s was the lesbian organization GALF (Facchini 2005:99). In addition, of the various gay publications that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, GALF was still publishing lesbian and activist bulletins—*Chanacomchana* and then *Um Outro Olhar*—into the early twenty-first century (Lessa 2007).

40. ABGLT was renamed the Brazilian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Transsexual Association.

41. Some of the national organizations (whether they be umbrella organizations, groups, conferences, seminars, or networks) created in the 1990s and in the first decade of the twenty-first century include National Articulation of Transgenders and Transsexuals in 1992; National Seminar of Brazilian Lesbians in 1996; Brazilian Lesbian League (LBL) in 2003; National Network of Black LGBT Activists (LGBT Afro Network) in 2005; and National Collective of Autonomous Black Feminist Lesbians—Candaces BR in 2007. See Facchini (2005:246–82) for her analysis of the "letter soup" (her phrase) of LGBT activism in Brazil.

42. There are also a number of local, regional, and national LGBT organizations in Brazil that are not connected with ABGLT (Facchini 2005).

43. See Keene (2004) for an interview with the president of Grupo Gay da Bahia, Marcelo Cerqueira.

44. For GGB publications, see Mott (2000, 2003a), Mott and Cerqueira (2001, 2003), and Mott et al. (1997).

45. This information is from an interview I conducted with Zora Torres on November 27, 2000.
46. In the early 1980s, there was a group of middle-class lesbian women and their friends who were in an organization called Grupo Liberátorio Homossexual (Homosexual Liberation Group) (Whitam et al. 1998:33–34).
47. Jane Pantel was not in Salvador while I was present in the city in 2000.
48. Sentiments about the limitations placed on lesbian groups were also echoed by a lesbian activist interviewed by Rafael de la Dehesa (2010:192).
49. In general, lesbian, gay, transgender, and transsexual activists in Salvador could not solely support themselves through their involvement with the LGBT movement. This is not to say that they did not receive funds or salaries from their efforts; typically, if these funds were provided by the government and/or national or international nongovernmental organizations, the resources were directly related to a specific project with a budget and a time frame. In addition, in order to receive these funds, an organization had to go through a complex process of institutionalization.
50. While Ajobi and LesBahia did not have headquarters during this time period, PML's headquarters had been located in two separate buildings in the downtown vicinity until 2008. In that year, the organization moved to Calabar, a *popular* (working-class) neighborhood in Salvador.

Chapter 2

1. Some scholars critique a focus on the relationship between language, sexual identity, and practice (Kulick 2000; Cameron and Kulick 2003).
2. Their understanding of queer linguistics is rooted in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropological perspectives that are influenced by Judith Butler's use of J. L. Austin's concept of performativity (1993). Even though these scholars do in fact find Butler "good to think with," they are also critical of her inadequate focus on the nexus between language and sexuality as seen from a local sociolinguistic standpoint (Bucholtz and Hall 2004:491–92; Livia and Hall 1997:7–8).
3. I have used pseudonyms for all the women I discuss in this chapter, and I have changed minor details in their stories in order to protect their anonymity. Again, the women who were the most concerned about their anonymity were middle- and upper-middle class educated white and light brown–skinned women.
4. Sheriff relies on Ruth Frankenberg's notion of "race evasive discourse" (2001:121–22) in her analysis of race relations in Brazil. Frankenberg argued that in the United States, a product of liberalism is the avoidance of the topics of racism and race in polite/politically correct conversations (1993).
5. See Goff (1994), Holmes and Tust (2002), Hunter (2007), and Likosky (1992) for examples of "coming out" narratives in the United States.
6. What would be called "common-law" marriages in the United States are common in Brazil.
7. It is not uncommon in Brazil for children to be raised by their grandparents because their own parents lack the resources to care for them. Additionally, women may work in other cities to financially support their children.

8. The opinions of the *ogãs* in Sandra's *terreiro* reflect similar sentiments I heard when I conducted research about Candomblé and sexuality (Allen 2012). For some, *ogãs* are thought to participate in bisexual behavior as the active sexual partner, while male initiates in the religion are the passive sexual partners (Fry 1982; Matory 2005b).

9. Scholars have often elaborated on women's need to perform heterosexuality and move in and out of heterosexualized spaces (Bell and Valentine 1995; Duncan 1996; Miriam 2007; Rich 1981; Valentine 1993).

Chapter 3

1. A woman described *roçar* as the action of people cutting wood in the field. She stated this while "mixing her hands."

2. The earliest use of the word "tribade" in print can be found in sixteenth-century French texts (Traub 1996:108; Vicinus 1992:493n36), and tribade was purportedly first published in English in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1601 (Vicinus 1992:493n36).

3. Another significant article by Barbosa and Koyama analyzes data from two population-based studies conducted in 1998 and 2005 about Brazilians' sexual practices (2008).

4. Another reason that sex toys may not be that popular in Brazil is because they tend to be very expensive. A low-end vibrator that would cost fifty dollars in the United States would cost three to four times as much in Brazil.

5. It is worth noting that even though fourteen of the thirty-one individuals that are quoted in the book are women, there is a six-to-one ratio of the use of quotes by men to women in this chapter. Moreover, throughout the chapter, a majority of the direct quotes about sexual practices are mainly from five informants: Antonio, João, Jose, Jose Carlos, and Sergio (Deutsch 1994).

6. Postmodernism's focus on contextuality, fragmentation, and the inability to fully grasp a situation through one interpretation can be beneficial in an analysis of subjectivity, agency, and social norms (Bordo 1992). However, I agree with Susan Bordo in that individuals, especially women, do not have equal footing in how they can conceptualize themselves because in many contexts, men have positions of dominance over women (1992:262).

7. The literal translation of *sapatona* is "woman who wears big shoes," or "big shoe." The literal translation of sapatão is "man who wears big shoes," or "big shoe." And the literal translation of camionheira is "female truck driver." All are common words that are used in Salvador to describe masculine women and other women who are thought to have female lovers. They can also be terms of self-identification. Depending on the actors involved, these terms can be endearing or insulting.

8. James Green notes in *Beyond Carnival* that the slang word *bofe* described a "real" man who was the active/penetrating partner, as opposed to a *bicha* or *boneca*, in a sexual encounter (1999a:6, 188–92, 268–69).

9. Rita was also my housemate for three months in 2008, and I discuss this living situation in the next chapter.

10. See chapter 1 of Butler and Salih (2004) for Butler's discussion and analysis of Cartesian dualism from the perspectives of Monica Wittig, Simone de Beauvoir, and Michel Foucault.

11. The biological parameters for the male or female sex are not as concrete as culturally conceived; however, since the accepted social construction of sex biology is very fixed in Brazil, I will follow this cultural construction accordingly. See Fausto-Sterling (2000).

12. Csordas has argued that emotions are "embodied states of being" and not "embodied thoughts" (Csordas 1990:37).

13. "Despite an overt commitment to attend to specificities of race, class, history, material conditions, and culture, performance theory's restricted focus on process leaves little room for the complexities and contradictions that appear as soon as an event like Prom Nite is firmly located in context. As a result, theories of gender performativity rest their political aspirations on a foundation as ethereal as the groundwork believed to prop up gender" (Weston 2002:73).

14. Kia Lily Caldwell's analysis of *boa aparência* (good appearance) describes the present-day importance of this category in Brazilian society (2007:67–68).

15. *Pegar* (to get or catch) was the word Roberta and other women used in their descriptions of their romantic lives.

16. Don Kulick notes that *travesti* (female transgender or transsexual) sex workers are often the active and penetrating partners in sexual encounters with "heterosexual" men (1998b:66). Although Kulick's work invites the possibility that the active partner is not always already a man, I would argue that *travestis'* gender subjectivity do not negate their "biological reality." Despite the fact that "biological sex" is complex and unambiguous (Fausto-Sterling 2000), culturally, the differences between women and men are considered a "social fact." Furthermore, by choosing to be penetrated by a *travesti* sex worker and not, perhaps, a woman wearing a strap-on, men are seeking penile and not penile-like penetration.

17. The Brazilian use of the term *comer* ("to eat") is not analogous to the American slang "eating pussy," referring to oral sex.

18. Queer studies have expanded the discourses about lesbian, gay, and heterosexualities to include a focus on gender, subversion, antiessentialism, fragmented sexualities and desires, and the deconstruction of sexual identities (Beemyn and Eliason 1996; Duggan 1992; Eves 2004; Johnson and Henderson 2005).

19. Among poor and working-class black lesbian and same-gender-loving women in the United States, discernible masculine and feminine gender appearance is prevalent, and Mignon Moore theorizes that these women purposely employ gendered attire and attitudes in order to demonstrate their availability and attraction to other women (2006).

20. Amber Hollibaugh states, "I was not what I dreamed, that fantasies had a reality of their own and did not necessarily lead anywhere but back to themselves. . . . It would also allow me a freedom unhindered by the limits of my body or the boundaries of my conscience" (1996:227).

21. "Furthermore, it is important to notice the ways in which the tribade partakes in discourses of female pleasure but also violates the category of woman" (Halberstam 1998:61).

22. Maria Filomena Gregori critiques the notion that sexual encounters have to involve sexual egalitarianism in order for each partner to gain pleasure from those experiences (2003:118). A statement by Amber Hollibaugh also speaks to this issue of pleasure diversity: "People fuck differently, feel differently when they do it (or don't) and want sex differently when they feel passion. We live out our class, race, and sex preferences within our desire and map out our unique passions through our varied histories" (1996:226).

23. Numerous conversations I had with black feminist and/or lesbian activists of different age ranges revolved around these issues in the black activist movement in Salvador.

24. Diana's preferences illustrate Judith Halberstam's observation that butches have the ability to be "masculine on the streets and female in the sheets" (1998:125).

Chapter 4

1. Even as I use a subjective framework as my primary mode of analysis in this chapter, I am mindful of this statement by Elizabeth Erbaugh: "Intimate partner violence can be conceptualized as occurring within three concentric circles: the intimate relationship, its immediate social circle, and the larger society" (2007:453).

2. I have changed minor details about Patrícia in order to protect her anonymity.

Chapter 5

1. Also see Abreu (2006), Belli (2004), Caldeira and Holston (1999), Gomes et al. (1986), Holston and Caldeira (1998), Lamounier (2005), and Peralva (2000) for their discussions of Brazilian democracy and problems related to the democratization process.

2. See Maria da Penha v. Brazil, Case 12.051, Report No. 54/01, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.111 Doc. 20 rev. at 704 (2000).

3. The five capitals with the highest homicide rates in 2007 were Maceió in Alagoas, Recife in Pernambuco, Vitória in Espírito Santo, João Pessoa in Paraíba, and Porto Velho in Rondônia. Salvador is number seven on the list (Waiselfisz 2010).

4. Among the women I interviewed, neither alcohol abuse nor any other substance use were given as reasons for the occurrence of IPV in their relationships.

5. Alves and Diniz (2005), Anderson and Umberson (2001), Connell (2005), Hautzinger (2002), Kaufman (2007), and Machado (2001) provide men's perspectives about IPV, mainly as the perpetrators of these acts.

6. A WHO study would seem to bolster Hautzinger's observations about why Brazilian women in Salvador would use physical violence in IPV encounters with their male partners (Ellsberg 2008; García-Morena 2006; WHO 2005a, 2005b). In the study, retaliation and self-defense appear to be the only reasons that women engage in violent behavior, particularly in the cases of severe physical violence (2005a: 20). Of women in the ten countries, Brazilian women used physical violence to fight back against their male attackers at the highest rate

(79 percent of the women from the city of Sao Paulo and 63 percent of the women from the state of Pernambuco). Peruvian women were a close second behind Brazilian women, with an urban/provincial divide of 74 percent and 64 percent, respectively (2005b:77).

Conclusion

1. New Revised Standard Version translation.
2. In Arthur Kleinman's discussion of everyday violence, he states, "Current taxonomies of violence—public versus domestic, ordinary as against extreme political violence—are inadequate to understand either the uses of violence in the social world or the multiplicity of its effects in experiences of suffering, collective and individual. The ethnography of social violence also implicates the social dynamics of everyday practices as the appropriate site to understand how larger orders of social force come together with micro-contexts of local power to shape human problems in ways that are resistant to the standard approaches of policies and intervention programs" (2000:227).

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